

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mike Tokunaga

Mike Tokunaga was born and raised on Maui. After graduating from Lahainaluna High School in 1939, he worked as a cane cutter to save money for college. In November of 1941, he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

After the war, Tokunaga returned to Hawai'i and attended the University of Hawai'i from 1946-49. While at the university he became active in student government. In 1950, at the urging of Daniel Aoki and John Burns, he became active in the Democratic party as a campaigner. He was a Democratic campaign co-manager along with Daniel Aoki, from 1954 to 1966. Following that time he no longer managed campaigns, but he continued to stay active as an organizer and campaigner for the party.

Tokunaga worked at the labor and industrial relations department from 1949 to 1956. He then worked for HGEA (Hawai'i Government Employee's Association) as a field representative from 1956 to 1962. During the John Burns administration, he was appointed deputy director of the state regulatory agencies. In 1968, he was the deputy director for the department of accounting and general services. In 1987, Governor John Waihee appointed him to the Aquatic Life and Wildlife Advisory Committee for Hawai'i county.

Tape Nos. 17-18-1-89 and 17-19-1-89

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mike Tokunaga (MT)

September 12, 1989

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Larry Meacham (LM) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following is videotape number one, interview with Mike Tokunaga. Interviewers are Larry Meacham and Dan Tuttle. Took place on September 12, 1989, at the Tokunaga residence.

LM: Okay, could you tell us something about your grandfather, how did he come to Hawai'i? Did he work the plantations his whole life?

MT: My grandad came to Hawai'i as a contract laborer. And he served his two-year [three-year] term, and because, I think he was a little smarter than, you know, the regular laborer that came from Japan, he learned how to cook. And I know the first job he held as a cook was—he became the cook for the principal at Lahainaluna High School. And I remember later on, when he was the cook for the manager of the Bank of Hawai'i in Lahaina, he used to call me, he used to tell me, anyway, once in a while, "Why don't you come down about five o'clock through the back door entrance, and—because I'm going to bake pies today for the bank manager, and I'll let you have a piece of pie." And I used to go down and get a piece of pie from him.

DT: And how old were you then?

MT: I was—I must have been about nine or ten. And he was a handsome man, you know, and I guess because he was a good-looking fellow, and my grandmother came with him to Hawai'i, and well, actually, he wasn't married when he came, you know. After he came to Hawai'i, he got involved with a Mrs. Nohara, you know, and because, in those days, there were much more men than women, he stole Mrs. Nohara from Mr. Nohara. And so, she became Mrs. Tokunaga. And I guess in those days, there were no legal divorces or whatever the case may be. So, Mrs. Nohara became the wife of my grandad, and from that so-called marriage, there were one, two—two boys and one girl. And all of them were born in Hawai'i except my dad [Nobumi Tokunaga]. My dad was conceived in Hawai'i and born in Japan because my grandma went back to Japan. And that's the reason why my dad always says when we ask him, "Where were you born?"

He says, "Made in Hawai'i, and born in Japan."

And, I knew my grandad very intimately because when I was about eight, nine years old and

up to about when I was about fifteen, I used to get involved in sumo. And my grandad used to tell me that, "If you win, I'll give you one dollar," you know, and those days, one dollar was a lot of money. And he used to take me down to the sumo tournament, and every time I won, he gave me a dollar, you know. And that's the reason why, I think, I remember him so well.

LM: So he was a pretty independent guy. He had a good job, too, huh?

MT: Yeah, those days, I think . . .

(Taping interrupted.)

JC: Okay, anytime now.

LM: Okay, so your grandfather was a pretty independent guy, had a pretty good job.

MT: That's right. I guess those days, domestic work was considered a much better job than working in the fields. And I know my dad, when he came from Japan, he was twelve years old. That was in 1910. And I recall he said, when he came he was twelve years old, he went to Kamehameha III School [in Lahaina], elementary school, and they put him in the first grade, and being twelve years old, all the other kids used to tease him, you know. And because they called him Japan *bobora*, and the younger kids used to tease him so much, that he left school. And so he said, maybe he went half a year of elementary school at Kam III School.

DT: But didn't you—if I may intervene here—you were born and grew up on Maui, right?

MT: That's right.

DT: But your father had been over on O'ahu earlier in his lifetime, then moved to Maui?

MT: No. My dad came from Japan and went directly to Maui.

DT: Directly to Maui.

MT: Yeah, to Pioneer Mill [Company]. And he worked over there and got married to my mother in Lahaina. My mother was born in Lahaina, and of course, she lost her citizenship when she got married to my dad because of the—what law was that? When a citizen marries an alien, a Japanese alien, that particular citizen lost his citizenship. [The 1922 act relative to citizenship and naturalization of American women provided that any American woman must lose her citizenship automatically by reason of her marriage to an alien whether eligible or ineligible himself to citizenship.]

LM: So neither your father or your mother could vote?

MT: That's right, at that time. And after the war [World War II] in 19—I think it was about '48 or '49, both of them got naturalized.

DT: This was result of McCarran Act [1952] probably.

MT: That's right, that's right.

LM: So your father dropped out of school, he immediately [went] to work for the plantation?

MT: Yeah, I think when he went to work for the plantation, he must have been about fifteen years old. And he started to work as a waterboy because he was so young. And later on, he got assigned to the Teshima gang [of workers]. And Mr. Teshima was the *luna*, and he had a gang, and they were involved in what they called the *hāpai kō*, loading the cane onto the cane cars. And evidently, my father was one of the best *hāpai kō* men, and consequently, Mr. Teshima had an eye on him, and eventually, my dad married his daughter, you know, Shizuyo. I think she was number two of the girls. And from that particular marriage, I'm the eldest, and there are—I have three other brothers and a sister. So, a family of five.

LM: What did your brothers and sister end up doing now?

MT: They---now?

LM: Yeah.

MT: I have a brother, two brothers in Los Angeles, and a sister in Los Angeles.

LM: Are they in business or . . .

MT: No, my sister was a seamstress, so she worked as a seamstress until she retired. One of my brothers, Takeshi, he was a draftsman, so he worked for an architectural firm. And Akira, the other brother, was a licensed electrician, so he worked as an electrician. Now Takeshi and Irene, my sister, are both retired, but my other brother Akira is still working. I have another brother in Pearl City, he's the youngest of the family, and he's still working for the [U.S.] Customs Service.

DT: Let me recap, you have three brothers and two sisters, or . . .

MT: One sister.

DT: One sister, okay. Three brothers and one sister.

MT: That's right.

DT: A total of five.

LM: So your father worked himself up from *hāpai kō*, and ended up doing other work, though, yeah?

MT: Yeah. I think when I was about five or six, he moved the family to Honolulu which was Baldwin Packers [Ltd.], a pineapple company, because evidently, he heard that he can make more money contracting as a pineapple worker. And they used to contract a number of acres and raise the pineapple and whatever came out of the pineapple fields, they got a percentage.

LM: Sharecropping?

- MT: Sharecropping. And he did that for two years in Honolua, and after two years, he found out that he wasn't making that much money. And Pioneer Mill wanted him back because they were going to do a pipeline in one of the gulches in Lahaina. So, he went back to work for Pioneer Mill.
- LM: Laying pipeline and doing shopwork construction?
- MT: Yeah. He was . . .
- LM: He made himself into a skilled worker by this time.
- MT: Yeah. He got into the boilermaker shop, and the boilermaker shop actually worked on the boilers in the mill, repairing the boilers in the mill. But they also did sheet metal work and heavy metal work to build pipelines, smokestacks, you know. And the—he took me up to the gulch where they put that pipeline in, you know. And I was shocked that, in those days, you know, they didn't have any fancy equipment, and I asked him, "Who went into the pipe to hold the rivets?" when somebody—and somebody else was hitting the rivets from the outside. And I think one section of the pipe was about twenty feet long, and somebody had to get down twenty feet into the pipe, and the pipe was straight down, down the gulch. And he told me because he was the youngest in the gang, he was the guy who had to get in the pipe, you know.
- LM: They would lower him down on a rope?
- MT: Yeah, they would lower him down on the rope, and he would hold the rivet from inside the pipe, and the guy with the jackhammer would hit the rivets from the outside, you know. And it was a very dangerous job, no workers' compensation [workmen's compensation insurance], you know.
- LM: So when you were born, did you grow up—I mean, did you speak Japanese at home? Or was it—did you live in a Japanese area of the camp? How did that go?
- MT: Yeah, because when I was about nine years old, my dad because [he was] a supervisor, like a foreman, you know, in the boilermaker shop, we were not living in the Japanese camp. The supervisors had a separate house, and we were living close to Lahaina town, on Lahainaluna Street. The house was provided by the plantation, no rent, and as far as I can remember, we lived down there on Lahainaluna Street up until the time I left to go to war.
- LM: So your friends, when you grew up, were all different groups, then?
- MT: Yeah. I was considered a downtown boy because we lived close to Lahaina town. And if you lived in the Mill Camp, which was primarily [a] Japanese community, you were known as a Mill Camp boy or Pump Camp [boy], you know. And there was a Portuguese community called Luna Camp. Most of the Portuguese were *lunas*, you know. And because I lived close to town, I was considered a downtown boy.
- LM: So you had Hawaiian and Portuguese and . . .
- MT: Yeah, and you see in Lahaina, there were quite a bit of a mixture of populations because

being the old capital [under the Hawaiian monarchy], there were a lot of Portuguese, Hawaiians, Chinese. And when I went to school, it was good mixture at Lahainaluna High School, and we—and I think that's the reason why I grew where I can get along with, you know, Hawaiians and Chinese, and all kinds of ethnic groups. And my mother used to get mad with me because once I had a Hawaiian girlfriend, and the other one I had [was] a Norwegian-Hawaiian girlfriend, you know, and my mother got worried because, in those days, the parents wanted you to marry a Japanese girl, you know. (Chuckles)

LM: But you ended up marrying a Japanese girl.

MT: I ended up marrying Japanese girl [Betty M. Tokunaga].

DT: Did you get involved in politics in high school at all?

MT: Only once when my friend, I think, Toshi [Toshiyuki] Nakasone ran for president of the senior class. We campaigned for him, and then he got elected. But that was the extent of my politics in high school.

DT: You didn't—you weren't in student government yourself at all?

MT: No, no.

DT: Okay, so after high school, then what did you do?

MT: After high school, I wanted to go to the University of Hawai'i, and that was in 1939, and my parents told me that they cannot afford it. So I told my parents that I'm going to work for two years, and then I'm going to go to the university with the money that I earned.

LM: But how come you were so ambitious? In those days, that was unusual, yeah?

MT: Yeah. And the reason why I decided to do that was because Mrs.—oh, I forgot her name—Hattie, my teacher . . .

LM: Foster?

MT: Foster. Mrs. Hattie Foster encouraged me to go to the University of Hawai'i. And when I graduated in 1939, I made that pledge that I was going to go to the University of Hawai'i in two years. But in 1941, in June, I got a draft notice to say, telling me that I had to stand by because I may be going into the army in July. And I stood by, and they didn't take me in July, but November in 1941, they took me. And I got drafted in 1941. And this was November 13, 1941. And when the war broke out on December the 7th, you know, I didn't even know how to shoot rifle, you know. And the military was not quite trusting us completely.

I recall one incident about two o'clock in the morning, somebody came into our tent, and they took all our rifles and all our ammunition away. And the following morning, the colonel got us all together, and there were about 900 Japanese boys, and the total complement, at that time, at tent city [at Schofield Barracks] was about 1200. And the colonel called us [together] and apologized, and told us that the reason why they took the rifles and ammunition away

from us was because they heard rumors that the Japanese were going to riot in Honolulu, and they weren't sure what we were going to do.

And another good incident was December the 7th evening, we went down to the warehouse to load barbed wire and sandbags. And we worked until about eleven o'clock at night, and they had to find a place for 1200 of us to sleep. And I don't think all 1200 of us went, but I was in the detail where we marched to the stockade, you know, the prison in Schofield [Barracks]. And I asked my sergeant, as we entered the prison, I asked my sergeant, Sgt. Nichols, regular army, *Haole* boy, and I asked him, "How come they putting us in prison?" you know.

And Sgt. Nichols says, "Well, this is the safest building they got around here. It's made of concrete," you know.

And I told the sergeant, "Don't give me that," you know. And but, nevertheless, we slept in the prison that night. And when we got into the prison, I met a Japanese aviator, who . . .

LM: They captured?

MT: They captured, who landed in the Wahiawā pineapple fields, and I talked to him in Japanese, and he was a Japanese aviator from one of the aircraft carriers.

DT: So your army career brought you to O'ahu, then. By this time, you were on O'ahu.

MT: That's right, that's right.

DT: When war broke out, you were at Schofield.

MT: That's right.

LM: When you were working, what were you doing those two years you were trying to save the money.

MT: The first year, I was in the fields doing cut cane, cutting cane, and *hāpai ko*, and cutting grass, you know. Let me tell you an incident while I was cutting cane. In the morning, see, I was a goldbrick. In the morning, everybody starts from one end of the field. And this was a long line of cane, and because I did not want to cut two sides, you know, I stalled. And I let the guys on both of my sides go, so they would cut the cane on the bank, and then when I went, you know, three-fourths of the cane is cut. All I do is pull 'em out, you know. And I was goldbricking, and I was sharpening my cane knife. And when I was doing that, all of a sudden, I got a swift kick in my *'ōkole*, and it was a real hard kick, you know, like I would kick a mad dog. And it was a real hard kick, and I stood up and I turned around, and I looked at the assistant manager, Harry Taylor. And I told Harry Taylor, "If you do that to me again, I'll wrap this cane knife around your neck," you know. And I really meant it, you know.

LM: Did he back off?

MT: He backed off, (chuckles) and he took off, because I think he could see in my face that I

really meant it, you know.

LM: Okay, we gotta take a cut now.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is videotape number two with Mike Tokunaga.

LM: So why were 900 of the 1200 guys at Schofield, Japanese?

MT: I would say, and my feeling is that the draft board was prejudiced. And they drafted more Japanese boys than any other group. And in my case, I felt that I was drafted because I was such a Bolshevik on the plantation, that the plantation manager [John T. Moir, Jr.] wanted to get rid of me, and hoped that I'll never come back to Lahaina again. So, I think in a lot of cases where they had other ethnic groups that could have been drafted, you know, they drafted mostly Japanese. And consequently when the war broke out, you know, I think the army brass was a little worried because there were too many Japanese boys. And I would say after we got shipped to [Camp McCoy] Wisconsin as the 100th Infantry Battalion in June of 1942, the army brass, I think, still did not. . . .

LM: They weren't sure, huh?

MT: Yeah, they weren't sure about our loyalty, you know.

DT: Can we go back just a little bit, please.

MT: Okay.

DT: You were drafted in November of '41.

MT: That's right.

DT: And then you were sent to boot camp at Schofield.

MT: That's right.

DT: What branch of the service—you were in the infantry . . .

MT: Infantry.

DT: . . . U.S. Army, what, the division or what designation did you have?

MT: We were training as recruits in Schofield in the U.S. Army infantry. And we trained from November 1941 to February 1942. And in February of 1942, some of us got shipped to Maui, and some got shipped to Hilo, and some got shipped to Kaua'i.

DT: And what was . . .

MT: But I was in the contingent that got shipped to Maui, and I was assigned to A company,

299th, the national guard outfit. And I want to tell you a story about the shipment to Maui. There was a group on the *Royal T. Frank*. This was a small little transport, and the *Royal T. Frank* was pulling a barge loaded with petroleum and building material, and all kinds of stuff. And the *Royal T. Frank* landed in Kahului, and we got off, the contingent that was supposed to get off on Maui, we all got off, and the boat left Kahului that night, and started around Hāna to go to Hilo.

And just outside of Hāna, the *Royal T. Frank* got torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. And I don't think this ever came out in the news because, you know, the United States government would not admit that a U.S. ship got torpedoed just outside of Maui. And the ship got torpedoed, and I had a few friends on that ship, who went down with the ship. And the *Royal T. Frank*, according to one of my friends who survived, his name was Taketa, he said, the first jar that he felt—they were shooting craps down in the hold, and the first jar he felt, he thought they had already docked at Hilo. So, he said he came up from the hold, and just as he came up to the entrance to the hold, the second torpedo hit the *Royal T. Frank*. And all he knew was the next thing, he was in the water, and covered with the crude oil. And he said, "I don't think the ship stayed afloat more than two minutes. The ship was split in half and it went straight down." And I had a few friends who went down with the ship, and I think there were nine survivors. Somebody told me that there were twenty-seven boys on that ship going to Hilo, and there were nine survivors. And we saw the survivors at Camp Paukūkalo, and they told us the story about how they got hit. [According to *Unlikely Liberators*' author, Masayo Duus, twenty-nine men were killed in the sinking of the *Royal T. Frank*.]

LM: So there was a real threat, then.

MT: There was a threat during the war, but I don't think the army notified the public because while we were stationed in Maui, the submarine, the Japanese submarine, used to bombard Kahului Harbor. They went after the oil tanks in Kahului Harbor, and they used to lob shells from way out. And the biggest gun we had on Maui was a forty-seven millimeter, an anti-tank gun, you know. And we could never reach that submarine out there. But the submarine used to bombard Kahului Harbor.

LM: So the war was real out there. With you guys patrolling the shore, you really thought it was a possibility.

MT: Yeah, with us, the war was real, you know. I don't think the civilians knew, you know.

LM: So you patrolled the shores to repel the Japanese invaders.

MT: Yeah, we patrolled the shores, and we went on patrol up to Haleakalā, and we were waiting for the Japanese to land, and nothing happened. Then in June of 1942, all the Japanese boys were told to report to Camp Paukūkalo, and we all went down to Camp Paukūkalo, and they told us that they were going to form the 100th Infantry Battalion as a separate unit. And I remember on June 6, we left Maui, 1942. And one of my friends, when he found out that he was going to get shipped out, he was supposed to have been married the following weekend. So, he ran home and got married, I think a judge got them married, and he left Maui without having a wedding party.

And we left Maui on June 6, and we came into O'ahu, and we were all shipped to Schofield

Barracks to form the 100th Infantry Battalion. And all the Japanese boys from all of the islands went to Schofield to form the 100th Infantry Battalion. Let me tell you a funny story on that. We had Charlie Diamond. He was a cook for Baker Company, 299th [Regiment] on Maui, and he also got called. And if you look at him, he looks like a pure Hawaiian. And we asked Charlie, "How come you with us?" you know. And Charlie says the only reason that he knows of, is that he was born in Tokyo. His father was a seaman. And when his mother went to Japan to meet his father in Japan, the mother gave birth to him in Tokyo. And because his birth certificate says, "Born in Tokyo," Charlie Diamond went with us. Not one ounce of Japanese blood.

There was another guy, Jimmy Kaholokula. Royal Hawaiian name, Kaholokula, you know. And Jimmy, we asked him, "How come you in with us," you know, "Jimmy?"

And he says, "I got one-eighth Japanese blood." And he went with us, you know.

On the other hand, my lieutenant, Mookini, he wanted to go with us. He volunteered, he wanted to go with us because he was so close to us; they wouldn't give him a shipping ticket. So the 100th was, in a way, a small part, a funny kind of outfit because we had non-Japanese. And consequently when we went to [Camp McCoy] Wisconsin, we had a good baseball team because all the Asahi [baseball team] players were on our team, and we had a good Hawaiian orchestra because we had some Hawaiian boys who belonged to us, and they were good for PR [public relations], going all over playing Hawaiian music, and our baseball team going all over playing baseball.

Willie Goo who was in Charlie Company, was a novelty because he used to go out and golf, and he used to golf barefooted. And I think there's a golf course called Tam O'Shanter outside of Chicago. And they invited him as a guest at Tam O'Shanter, and this is a private golf club, because they wanted to see Willie golf with his barefoot. And we had pretty good relations with the civilians in Wisconsin. I would say most of the people in Wisconsin were Norwegians, you know. There were some Germans, and from the northern part of Europe, and they were very open with us. We're very—we sometimes ran into people who called us Japs, you know, that starts a fight. But generally speaking, we were treated pretty good in Wisconsin. We went to [Hattiesburg] Mississippi, you know.

LM: Different?

MT: It's different, you know, and this was 1943, January.

LM: Can we back up and ask you to [tell us] why were you considered a sort of a Bolshevik on the plantation?

MT: Well, as I told you the story about Mr. Harry Taylor, I almost cut him up with a cane knife. Another incident was—we were assigned to cut the cane in front of the cane grab, you know, the machine that picks up the cane and puts it in the car. Well, we were assigned the job of standing in front of the tractor, and then in front of us was the grab, you know. And we were supposed to be in between the tractor and the grab to cut the cane that was not pulled out by the grab, you know, which is a very dangerous job. You wouldn't know whether that tractor was going to run over you in the back or the cane grab was going to fall on you. And I told my friend, Takao Okamitsu, "Eh, let's get out of here," you know. And we started at seven

o'clock at night, I think. This was night work. So Takao Okamitsu and I, we walked out, and we refused to do that kind of a dangerous job, you know.

And the next day, the assistant manager, my good friend Harry Taylor, came down to the mill at four o'clock in the morning when we reported, and he said, "You and Okamitsu, we're going to give you separate job," you know. And they assigned us to unload the mud press, the mud that came out of the mill, and they used to dump this mud way out in the valley. And there weren't anybody out there, you couldn't talk to anybody because there was nobody out there except the mynah birds. And Takao Okamitsu [and I] were assigned that job so we couldn't influence anybody, and we kept on unloading the mud from the cars.

LM: And you said the whole Asahi baseball team had been drafted. You were active in that?

MT: Well, no. Some of the—the Asahi baseball team, a lot of them were of age to be drafted, so a lot of them were drafted, and came with the 100th Infantry Battalion. Now, the Asahi baseball team is an O'ahu team. And I never played baseball except in the junior league when I was about fifteen years old, and [then] I gave up baseball. And the Asahi team was made up of mostly O'ahu boys.

DT: You mentioned after you left Wisconsin, you went to Mississippi.

MT: That's right.

DT: And you were befriended down there by a number of people, I think including one person who later became part of the Democratic party here, Earl Finch. [Earl Finch, a storeowner and rancher, who befriended men of the 100th in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, moved to Hawai'i in the postwar period.]

MT: Earl Finch.

DT: Did you have any contact with him in Mississippi, or was this with some of your friends or later friends in the Democratic party?

MT: I had no contact with Earl Finch in Mississippi. I got to know Earl Finch after he joined the Democratic party.

DT: Here in Hawai'i?

MT: In Hawai'i. And going back to moving to Mississippi in January of 1943—incidentally, we stayed in Wisconsin June of '42 to January of '43. And we enjoyed the snow when it first fell on Thanksgiving Day, and by December, we were fed up with snow (chuckles). We all bought skates, we all bought skates. We made a skating rink in camp. We created a skating rink in camp. The fire department helped us flood that area. But besides that, you know, you couldn't do anything. And I went from 140 pounds to about 190 pounds, you know.

And when we went down to Mississippi, it was a cultural shock. It was a cultural shock to us, anyway. And I'm going to tell you some stories. When I first went on a pass from Hattiesburg—I mean, from camp, Camp Shelby to Hattiesburg, which was a small little town, Jimmy Yoshida and I went to the theater. And the first thing I did was, I went to the wrong

ticket booth, you know. And the Black girl said, "You all buy your ticket on the other side." And that's when I realized that, you know, we're not Black. So I went over to the other side, and the *Haole* girl was selling tickets, and we bought the ticket from her. And when we got in, there were two stairways that went upstairs. And I told Jimmy, "Let's go up to 'Nigger Heaven'." You see, in Lahaina, we always used to go to "Nigger Heaven," up in the balcony, and we used to call it "Nigger Heaven," but not realizing why, you know. And in Hattiesburg, I told Jimmy, "Let's go up to 'Nigger Heaven'," you know, and we started going up the stairway, and the head usher called us and said, "You cannot go up there." So I asked him, "Why?" He said, "That's 'Nigger Heaven', that's only for Niggers." And I thought to myself—and you know, I was twenty-two years old, and that was the first time in my life I realized what "Nigger Heaven" meant. Because when I went into the theater downstairs, and I sat and I looked upstairs in the balcony, there were all Black faces, you know. And I told Jimmy, "Oh, now I know why they call that 'Nigger Heaven.'"

And another incident was when I, at the bus station, I went to buy ice cream. And because the back of the ice cream wagon was facing us, I went to the little cubbyhole, and I asked the girl inside if we could have two ice cream cones. And the girl in the wagon said, "You all come to the front," you know, because the little cubbyhole was for Blacks. So us White people, we went out to the front to buy our ice cream.

Another incident was in New Orleans. And there's always two lines, one Black and one White, and I was the first guy in the White line, trying to catch the bus, to go back to Camp Shelby. And an old woman, I would say she must have been about seventy or eighty years old, a Black woman, was standing in the Black line. And when the bus stopped and opened the door, the door opened right [in front] of her, and she tried to get in, you know. And the bus driver came out and pushed her, and she fell. And the bus driver said, "Let the White people in first." I grabbed the White bus driver by the shirt and dragged him out of the bus, and six of us kicked the hell out of him for knocking that poor Black woman down. And when we got to camp—when I got back to camp, our colonel got us, the whole battalion together. "You know," he says, "I want to warn you guys, you cannot change the mores of the South. You got to live with it. So, I don't want you boys to go out there and sticking your neck out for the Black." (Chuckles) And he gave us good scoldings, you know.

DT: Interesting now, that they have changed, even within your lifetime.

MT: That's right, that's right. And today, when you get down there, it's entirely different. I was down in New Orleans about five years ago, and it's entirely different, you know. I remember catching a plane, I mean, catching a train from Camp Shelby, going up to St. Louis. And Black cars and White cars, you know. And when you pass the Mason-Dixon Line, everybody went all over. And because we were brought up in Hawai'i and we've never seen these kinds of things, it was a cultural shock.

I remember from Louisiana, from the training area, we were going on pass, and—on a bus, and there were about six of us from the 100th, and one Black boy tried to get on the bus. He got on the bus all right, and instead of going to the back seat, he went halfway down the aisle and he sat down. And the bus driver told him, "You, Black boy, get to the back of the bus." And the Black boy said, "Look, you see this uniform? I am an American soldier, and you're not going to put me in the back seat." And the bus driver went to the Black boy, grabbed him by his shirt, and started to drag him out, and throw him out of the bus, you know. And six of

us, from the 100th, jumped the bus driver. (Chuckles) We jumped the bus driver, threw the bus driver out of the bus, and we drove off with the bus, you know, with the Black boy on the bus. And that was another story the colonel heard.

LM: You guys didn't get busted for this stuff?

MT: And before we got to New Orleans, we dumped the bus and took off, you know. (Chuckles)

DT: I guess we better stop there for a moment until we've changed tape.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: The following is a continuation with Mike Tokunaga. This is videotape number three.

MT: Fortunately we had teachers at high school who came from the Mainland, who came from outside of Maui, who were not tied in with the plantation people [i.e., plantation management]. That makes a lot of difference, you know.

JC: Camera, we're rolling, so anytime.

LM: Okay, so the 100th was then sent to North Africa for starters, yeah?

MT: That's right. That was in, I think it was July of 1943. [The convoy left New York on August 21, 1943. It arrived in Oran, September, 2, 1943.] We went by convoy from New York to Oran, North Africa. And in that convoy, there were roughly about 300 ships, and it took us all of fifteen days getting to Oran. And one of my poor friends, he got seasick when he saw that ship, and he was in bed for fifteen days, never got out of bed, and he survived on an orange, an orange a meal, and the poor guy lost fifteen pounds [by the time] we got to Oran. But there was no serious incident going from New York to Oran. I understand part of the convoy went over to, I think, the next seaport, I forgot what it was, I think it was Bizerte, I think. And they got hit by German planes. But our convoy never got hit.

LM: So then to Italy?

MT: And then, while we were in North Africa, we were told that we were attached to the 34th division, and we became part of the 34th division, the Red Bull division, and from North Africa, we went to Salerno, Italy. And we landed in Salerno in September 1943. And the landing was nothing because before the 34th went in, I think the 3rd division and the 45th division had landed first. So the 34th division was in reserve, and our first casualty came on the second day we were in Italy, and that was Joe [Shigeo] Takata from Waiialua. And consequently, we hold our memorial service in September, the last Sunday in September, in memory of Joe Takata.

LM: What sort of combat were you guys involved in mostly?

MT: In combat, you never take the highway, you know. The Germans are always up in the hills, looking down on you. And consequently, we have to go after the Germans up in the hills, and from, I would say, the third day in Italy, they put us up on the front, and we started getting involved in combat. And the most fierce fighting we did in the first months in Italy, was in an area called Alife. And that's A-L-I-F-E. And we came in contact with the Germans, and they came after us with tanks, and that's when I think "Slim" Nakano was the first 100th member who knocked out a tank, and then Masao Awakuni from our company, Charlie Company, C Com—Charlie Company—knocked out a tank down in Alife. And when we put in a citation for Masao Awakuni, we put in for a Distinguished Service Cross. And I guess the brass in the back didn't know what kind of name it was. It's peculiar-sounding name, Masao Awakuni, and the citation came back as a Bronze Star, you know, which is the lowest of the citations. We found out later that Commander Kelly, from the 3rd division knocked out a tank, and he got a congressional medal [Medal of Honor], you know. So, when Masao Awakuni knocked out the second tank in Cassino, they couldn't help but give him a DSC [Distinguished Service Cross]. They won't give him a congressional medal, but they gave him a DSC, and I think he is the only American soldier who knocked out two tanks in World War II, you know.

LM: Did he survive the war?

MT: He survived the war, and he lives out in Pearl City someplace. And the poor boy stutters, you know, and you would think he's a very excitable guy, but on the front line, he's cool as a cucumber. Let me tell you a story about him. We were attacking the German line, and all of a sudden, they open up on us with a machine gun, and they missed me, they hit the guys, the guy, two in the back of me. And then I saw these two Germans running, so I went for the machine gun nest, and getting into the German machine gun nest, I turned the machine gun around, the German machine gun. I tried to fire, and the thing was jammed. And it's [no] wonder the two guys took off, you know. And then another guy, another German from behind the house took a shot at me with a machine pistol, which is like a tommy gun, and he split my helmet and grazed my cheek. He had me pinned down, and I didn't know what I was going to do, and all of a sudden, you know, my Hawaiian ingenuity started working. I picked up a stone, and I threw it at him. And I figured, he's going to think it's a hand grenade, so he's going to duck. And when he ducked, I jumped out and I went into the bushes, and the crazy guy stuck his head out again. And when he stuck his head out, I hit him, and it was only about thirty yards, you know.

And then the tank came out and came right into the gully and stopped, with his motor running. I called for Awakuni who was our bazooka man. Awakuni came up, and I loaded the bazooka, and I told Awakuni go ahead and shoot it, you know, and this was right through the bushes. And Awakuni put the bazooka down, and I asked him, "What's the matter?" you know. And he says, "My glasses, it's all fogged up." Because he had crawled about fifty yards, he was perspiring, and his glasses fogged up. So he put his bazooka down, and got his dirty, old G.I. handkerchief and wipes his glasses, and put it on, and then he picks up his bazooka and he hit the tank and knocked it out.

And same thing with the second tank, you know. The tank came for him, and like a turkey, he showed his head, and then he moved, and the tank hit the area where he was, and from his second position, he hit the tank on the track. But this was a bigger tank, it was a medium-sized tank, and he couldn't knock the tracks out. So we yelled at him to hit the underneath of the tank where there's a lot of oil and excess gas. And sure enough, the second shell put the

tank on fire, and the Germans started coming out of the tank. And that, he got a DSC, you know, and I think he deserves the congressional medal.

LM: So were there a lot of casualties?

MT: In Cassino, I would say, let me give you some numbers. We, Charlie Company, we started off in Salerno with about 203 boys. By the time we got to Cassino, we had 126, roughly. And when we went up on Cassino, to take the monastery, and when the brass told us that we got to pull back because they're going to bomb the monastery, and the day that we pulled back, twenty-three of us walked back. Now, I'm not saying . . .

LM: Ten percent were still in commission in the end.

MT: Yeah, 10 percent. And I'm not saying they all died.

LM: Yeah.

MT: Most of them got wounded, casualty. And when we pulled back, they bombed the monastery, the B-17s. And we were, I would say, when we got up there, we were about 150 yards from [the] monastery wall, you know. And we couldn't break the German line, so they pulled us back, and they bombed the monastery. And even after we bombed the monastery, the Germans continued to shoot us, you know, from the monastery. And at that time, I would say, the German army was a pretty good outfit, you know, they had good men, they had good officers. But toward the end of the war, they had old men, forty-five years old, and boys fifteen years old.

DT: You finished off the war in Italy, then, and came back to [the] United States?

MT: That's right.

DT: And you were mustered out where?

MT: I got back to Hawai'i in August of 1945, and before I tell you about getting back, let me tell you some incidents which happened in San Francisco. On my way back, I was sent to Camp Beale outside of Sacramento, waiting for shipment back to Hawai'i. So we used to go on pass to Sacramento and San Francisco. And three of us went on a pass to San Francisco, and we went to the opera house because I heard that they were having the United Nations meeting, to organize the United Nations. And we went over there, and when we went to the entrance, the usher told us that we had to have a pass from our congressman. And I told them we don't have a congressman, we have a delegate. And he told us go and see the colonel who's in charge of security. So we went down to see the colonel, and the colonel looked at us, and he asked us if we're combat veterans, and we told him, "Yeah. "

He said, "You got a Purple Heart?"

[I] said, "Yeah, I got three of them," you know.

And we were treated like first-class citizens, royally, you know. He took us up through the side entrance, led us in, sat us right up front, you know. And we watched the proceedings

going on. And the man that I really remember is [Edward Reilly] Stettinius, silver-haired man representing the United States, you know. And we felt good being combat veterans coming back, and being treated like first-class citizens. We came . . .

LM: You were treated like that when you came to Hawai'i?

MT: Well, before coming to Hawai'i, let me tell you what happened in San Francisco. After that, we came out, and we went to a bar. I don't drink, but two of my friends wanted to have a beer. So we went to a bar, and we went into the bar, sat down, and waited, and waited, and waited, you know. And nobody would serve us, you know. And I asked the bartender in the back of the bar, "Eh, how about some service?"

And the guy said, "We don't serve Japs in this bar."

(Chuckles) I saw red. I picked up the chair and I threw it at him, you know. And he ducked. And you know in all bars, there's a big glass mirror in the back, and [the chair] shattered the glass mirror, and two of my friends picked up their chairs and they start breaking up things and throwing it through the front window, you know. And I told them, "Eh, wait, wait, wait. Let's get out of here," and we got out. After I got out, I thought, "Oh, my God." We [had] just come out of a function where we're treated like first-class citizens, and now we're third-class citizens, you know.

DT: Devoted to peace and suddenly you're back in the war?

(Laughter)

MT: We started to fight the war all over again, you know.

LM: But back in Hawai'i, what was the situation like? What did you find when [you] got back?

MT: Okay, when we got back, we were treated like heroes. I was in the contingent that came back in driblets, you know. We didn't come back in a big group. Like the group I came back with, maybe there were about thirty of us, and we went straight to Schofield, and they started—the day that we came back, and I think two or three days later, the war in Japan ended, you know. And consequently, they sent us out on pass, and we went back to Maui, and came back after thirty days, and in September 1945, we got discharged.

And in September of 1945, I went to see Dr. [Bruce E.] White at the university [i.e., University of Hawai'i], thinking that I could start going to school in September of that 1945. And Dr. White looked at me and said, "No, I wouldn't recommend you coming right back to school. Why don't you go take some night courses at McKinley High School, and kind of get into the habit of sitting down and studying," you know.

And so I said, "Okay." So I started university in February of 1945.

DT: February of '45?

MT: [Nineteen] forty-six.

DT: [Nineteen] forty-six. This is Dr. Bruce White at the College of Education.

MT: That's right.

DT: There was another White [John White] at the university in the history department.

MT: Yeah.

LM: So the veterans hung out together a lot at UH [University of Hawai'i]?

MT: The veterans hung out together and I think the professors didn't like it, you know, because the professors thought that some of the veterans were looking down on them. And there was one particular professor that the veterans did not like, was Harold Bitner. Not Harold Bitner (pause) . . .

LM: What did he teach? That's okay, we'll find out.

MT: Harold Bitner was a good guy. Yeah, he was a good guy, but there was [K. C.] Leebrick.

DT: Leebrick was . . .

MT: Leebrick, he was a veterans' . . .

LM: Leebrick, the colonel.

MT: The colonel. He was a---Dr. Leebrick was supposed to be the veterans' advisor. And I remember going in to see him about a little problem once because I was president of the vets dorm [veterans dormitory] association. And when I walked in, he told me, "Put out that cigarette, soldier," you know.

And I looked at him, and I told him, "I'm not a soldier, Dr. Leebrick."

And he wanted to impress us with army rules, you know, being a colonel. And he was, we felt that he was never looking after the veterans' cause, you know. And we requested once to have him taken off as the veterans' advisor, and we wanted Harold Bitner as our veterans' advisor. And the university administration refused. And consequently we held a picket in front of his office. And I think that was the first time university students picketed. And I got called in by the vice-president, I forgot what his name was.

DT: It might well have been [Paul] Bachman at that time, I don't know.

MT: Bachman.

DT: Bachman may have been.

MT: Bachman, Paul Bachman. But generally speaking, we were, we had pretty good, fair quarters, you know, at veterans dorm, and \$7.50, I was getting all of \$75.00 from the G.I. Bill, you know. And we, most of the veterans hung around with each other, because you know, I was twenty-six years old, or twenty-five years old, and the valedictorian from Kaua'i High School

in my history class was eighteen years old, and I felt like an older, older brother, you know. So we pretty much hung around together.

DT: You partied together?

MT: Partied together and got drunk together, you know.

LM: And you ran guys for office, too.

MT: That's right. We ran people for office and took over the student government [Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i], and . . .

LM: So the veterans pretty much ran, dominated the student government?

MT: That's right. The veterans dominated the student government. I remember the professor who was in charge of drama.

DT: That's probably [Joel] Trapido.

MT: Trapido.

DT: [Earle] Ernst, Trapido. Ernst, I mean Trapido. Ernst was another professor.

MT: Oh yeah.

DT: Yeah, Trapido was the drama [chair].

MT: Trapido, Trapido. Yeah. I remember Dr. Trapido. He had a woman on the payroll taking care of the costumes at the—the theater girl. And the university was paying half of her salary, and the ASUH [Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i] was paying half of her salary, you know. So when I made a move to delete, I think [it] was \$150 a month from the budget paying the woman for doing the costumes work for the drama class, Dr. Trapido objected, and he gave all kinds of reasons why the ASUH should pay half of it. My friends on the student council passed it, and we deleted the \$150. And I think that was a sign that the administration got that these veterans are going to revolt and they better be up and up with us, you know.

DT: We will pick that up in just a few moments, as soon as we change tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is videotape number four, continuation of interview with Mike Tokunaga.

LM: You got out of school, and now married, all right.

MT: Yeah.

LM: Then how did you first get involved in politics outside of school?

MT: This was in 1950, when Dan Aoki [a 442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran, Democratic party organizer, and later aide to John A. Burns] and I were co-chairmen for the Japanese circus, sponsored by the 442nd Veterans Club and the Club 100. And one day, Dan Aoki asked me to join the Democratic party, and I told Dan, "You give me some reasons why." Because 1948, I voted for people like Ben [Benjamin F.] Dillingham [II] and [Wilfred] Tsukiyama. I didn't know anything about politics, you know, but they were the most well-known guys in town. So Dan says, "Come on, I'll take you to talk to Jack Burns [i.e., John A. Burns]." Jack Burns was civil defense director under [Mayor of Honolulu] Johnny [John H.] Wilson's administration, and this was in the basement of city hall. And one of the first things Jack Burns asked me, was whether I was a plantation boy. And I says, "Yeah, I'm a plantation boy."

And he says, "You feel you getting equal treatment in this community?"

I told him, "No," you know.

And he says, "If you want to get treated like a first-class citizen," he says, "play politics."

So I asked him, "How am I going to get treated like first-class citizen if I play politics?"

And he says, "If you get into a position of power, whether elected or not, if you belong to the Democratic party and you get into a position of power, you don't have to go after them. They will come looking for you. And they will socialize with you, and they will start talking to you."

So I told Jack Burns, "It's a deal. I'd like to get into a position where they come looking for me."

LM: But the Democratic party was very weak then. Why would you believe it would improve?

MT: Okay. So he said, "We've got to build up the Democratic party." And he says, "Right now, it's nothing." And Dan Aoki started working among the 442 boys, and I started working among the 100th, but people like Sakae Takahashi in the 100th was a Democrat already. [Yasutaka] Fukushima, a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion was a Republican. [Katsumi] Kometani was a Republican, you know. The 100th Infantry Battalion was older boys and the older Japanese boys were generally Republicans, you know, like Tsukiyama, Joe Itagaki. The younger ones, they were ripe for the picking, where Dan Aoki was organizing, because they never played politics, you know, and before they left for the war, politics meant nothing.

DT: You mentioned something interesting earlier off camera. Prior to 1950, you sort of got along with Republicans when it comes to voting, that sort of thing, hadn't you?

MT: That's right. And politics meant nothing to me, you know, while I was going to school until '49, until I had my talk with Jack Burns in 1950. And we started organizing among the organizations first, you know. We even moved into the PTA [Parent-Teacher Association]. And we went to the PTA convention trying to recruit Democrats. And . . .

LM: What other kind of organizations would you go to?

MT: Well, we—Burns was a strong Lions [Club] member, so we left the Lions to him. And the 442, the 100th, we moved into the PTA, we tried to recruit some people in the business community, who were generally Republicans. Keiji Kawakami, 'Iolani Sportswear, was one of them. And because he was plantation-bred from Kaua'i, you know, it was easy to get his help. I remember he was one of the first businessmen who gave us some help in making banners for Jack Burns.

DT: Bill [William R.] Norwood probably gave you some help, too, didn't he, Castle & Cooke?

MT: Yeah. Bill Norwood came into the picture when Jack Burns was running for governorship. Before that, I've never come in contact with Bill Norwood. Bill Norwood came into the picture in 1959 when Burns was running for . . .

LM: You weren't aware of his being [involved], even before that?

MT: No, no.

LM: So what was the pitch you would use to get these guys in the party? Equality or getting ahead in the world?

MT: No, generally equality, you know, first-class citizenship. And most of the guys, because they were plantation background, bought it, you know. And neighbor islands, we had no problem. Through the 442nd and the 100th, we contacted boys on the neighbor islands. The old politicians, at that time, that we contacted were Kazuhisa Abe. There was another guy, Tadao Okimoto who was a Democratic party worker, [Turk] Tokita on Kaua'i. From Maui, [Masaru] "Pundy" Yokouchi, you know. We started organizing statewide, and primarily, we were concerned about the territorial Democratic party. And then as . . .

LM: You wanted to take it over, essentially.

MT: That's right. We wanted to take it over, and run it. And 1952, Jack Burns tried to organize a ticket in the fourth district house of representatives, to try and take the fourth district house of representatives. But people like Dan [Daniel K.] Inouye and Sparky [Spark M.] Matsunaga and Masato Doi, they weren't quite ready.

LM: What was the fourth district? What area was that?

MT: That's from Nu'uuanu Avenue, all the way around to Koko Head.

LM: So was this a lot of Japanese voters at that time?

MT: I would say the stronghold of the Japanese voters were Mō'ili'ili, McCully, Mānoa—not too much, you know. Pālolo Valley. And the . . .

DT: Oh, Kuli'ou'ou, what there was left.

MT: Yeah, Kuli'ou'ou, whatever there was, the farmers, you know. And when we organized the fourth district [in 1954], there was Dan Inouye, Masato Doi, Russell Kono, Sparky Matsunaga. And we said, you know, we gotta color the ticket, it cannot be all Japanese. So

we got Anna Kahanamoku to run, and Herman Lum. And Willie [William H.] Crozier, Mike [Michael] Crozier's father, you know, he was a perennial candidate. He's always running, he was always running. (DT chuckles.) But we didn't think that he would make a good candidate for the ticket, you know, so we supported Herman Lum in place of Willie Crozier. And in fact, I was the campaign manager for Herman Lum, you know. And when we went to see Herman to run, Dan Aoki and I, finally he agreed, and he said, "Who's going to be my campaign manager," and I volunteered. And luckily he lost [in the primary], you know, and that's why he's [Hawai'i] supreme court [chief] justice today.

(Laughter)

LM: So how did, how did—what did you do in these campaigns? You were in the 1950 campaign, also, yeah?

MT: Yeah.

LM: That was Sakae Takahashi's campaign for the Con-Con, [Constitutional Convention] yeah?

MT: That's right.

LM: What did you actually do on the streets and so forth?

MT: Usually what we did was, we contacted our old friends, you know. But see, Dan Aoki and I got involved in the organization of the Democratic party at the precinct level. So we had contact with somebody in every one of those precincts, and we were working with Tom Gill [O'ahu county committee chair] at that time, you know, until Tom Gill told us that we gotta get rid of Jack Burns, and then we parted company.

LM: So you would use your contacts in each precinct?

MT: We used our contact in each of the precincts.

LM: And then what would they do? Door to door, flyers?

MT: Well, those days were door to door, flyers, community rallies, you know, and radio, not too much TV. I forgot what year TV came in, and . . .

DT: In '53 and . . .

MT: [Nineteen] fifty-three?

DT: [Nineteen] fifty-three.

MT: It scared us, the TV, because Burns doesn't look good on TV, you know.

LM: Did you make your own radio ads or would you have them professionally . . .

MT: No, we had help from the guy who was with—eventually, Frank Valenti folks took over, the PR [public relations] outfit.

- DT: Yeah, [Raymond] Milici and his partner [Paul Beam].
- MT: His partner who died in the plane crash.
- DT: Right, that's right.
- MT: Yeah, he died in a plane crash observing the tidal wave out on the North Shore. And . . .
- LM: So they helped you write and broadcast?
- MT: Yeah, they did most of it, and our media, our printing, was done by the *Honolulu Record* which was labeled as Communist, you know. And Koji Ariyoshi and Ed [Edward J.] Rohrbough was running that.
- LM: So how much would you say, take a typical campaign, take Sakae Takahashi's campaign for Con-Con, how much would you spend, and where did it go, roughly, would you say?
- MT: I would say, mostly for print material, a little advertising, and feeding the workers, you know. And in . . .
- LM: In what and what proportion would you get? Half for printing?
- MT: No, I would say—yeah, maybe half for printing, yeah. And I would say about one-third for feeding the boys, you know.
- LM: And a little bit of radio.
- MT: Little bit of radio.
- LM: How much did that campaign cost, roughly? Takahashi's? Would you say?
- MT: Takahashi's campaign? I don't think it cost two or three thousand dollars. Let me give you an example. In Jack Burns' delegate race in 1956—'54, we spent all of \$6[000] or \$7,000, territory-wide. And we went \$1500 in the hole, you know. And I remember Dan [Aoki] and I went to see Jack Hall [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union regional director] to ask Jack Hall to give us \$3,000 more for the last two weeks. And Jack Hall laughed at us. And he said, "Look, Burns cannot win." He says, "Why should I give you \$3,000 and throw that thing down in the toilet bowl?" And unfortunately, we lost by 880 [890] votes against [Elizabeth] Betty Farrington.
- LM: All right, so '50 is Sakae Takahashi's campaign. [Nineteen] fifty-two campaign, what were you working on?
- MT: [Matsuo] "Matsy" Takabuki.
- LM: Okay, he was running for . . .
- MT: He was about the only guy who was running as a veteran.

DT: Downtown. Honolulu board of supervisors.

MT: Board of supervisors.

LM: And how did that campaign go? I mean, did it cost a lot?

MT: No, about the same as Sakae Takahashi's campaign. Mostly for print material, you know.

LM: Was that—wasn't districts in those days, was it?

MT: No, the board of supervisors, I think, was island-wide.

LM: Was island-wide.

MT: Yeah.

LM: So again you used your contacts?

MT: We used our contacts around the island.

DT: But this participation in politics, as you moved into '50 and '52, and into '54, this brought you into a degree of conflict with some of the older members of the Democratic party such as Ernie [Ernest K.] Kai, Johnny Akau [i.e., John K. Akau, Jr.], Ernie [Ernest] Heen and his son, Walter Heen.

MT: Yeah.

DT: And this, perhaps, accounts for why you end up, perhaps being in the opposing camp with Tom Gill.

MT: Mm hmm [yes].

DT: Tom Gill (tape inaudible).

MT: Yeah. You see, when the so-called young veterans moved into the Democratic party, there were the older Democrats, you know. And people like Ernest Heen, especially . . .

DT: His brother, Bill [William] Heen.

MT: . . . and his brother, Bill Heen, Akau, they felt that we were pushing them aside, you know.

DT: You were.

MT: And we—I remember once we asked Ernest Heen to run for delegate [to Congress] in 1956, I think. Yeah. No, no, in 1954. In 1954, we asked Ernest Heen to run for delegate, because the ILWU told us—Jack Hall told us—that Ernest Heen was acceptable, you know. And we asked Ernest Heen to run for delegate, and I think Ernest Heen felt that we were feeding him to the wolves, because the [Republican] candidate was going to be Betty Farrington, whose husband [Joseph R. Farrington] had died, you know.

DT: I would imagine, too, that the ILWU was really pretty much divided, itself. They've always supported Joe Farrington, right, and so probably goodly number of them were still supporting Betty even though Jack Burns was running for the second time, run for delegate.

MT: That's right, that's right.

LM: So Heen refused to run.

MT: So Heen refused to run.

LM: So Jack had to run.

MT: So when we got word that Heen was not going to run, I circulated Jack Burns's nomination papers. And on the last night to file the nomination papers, we were sitting in Jack Burns's office at city hall, and I said, "Okay, I want two dollars from everybody." I think we had to have something like fifteen or thirty dollars to file the papers. And I collected enough money, and Charlie [Charles E.] Kauhane, our good friend, was in the room, and he took the papers and filed it. And that's how Jack Burns became a candidate. And Jack said if we cannot find a candidate, he will run, you know.

LM: But he was reluctant, huh?

MT: I don't think he was all for running.

DT: But he was reluctant, was he not, because he'd been given a hard time about in '52 he'd been elected territorial [party] chairman, and there was some feeling within the party, as I recall, that he shouldn't be territorial chairman, and then suddenly promote yourself to office. So he was reluctant in '54. But in '52, you were in the convention, I think . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . and you had a lot of hard dealing there because Frank Fasi became national committeeman, Jack became territorial chairman, and you had a platform which served you well, not so much in '52, but in '54, which was put together by Bob [Robert G.] Dodge.

MT: That's right. That's right.

LM: So, let me see if I get this straight. In '50 you joined, at what point do the young veterans pretty much take over the Democratic party, would you say?

MT: I would say in the '52 [MT meant to say 1950] Democratic party convention, you know. We didn't take it over completely, but we had enough votes to swing it, one way or the other.

LM: I see.

MT: And we walked in there, and see, Jack Hall was trying to take over the Democratic party, you know, with his ILWU members. And we felt that if Jack Hall took over the Democratic party, the Democratic party's going to die because you cannot have the union, and the Democratic party one and the same. And we told Jack Hall that, but I think some of his

lieutenants got ambitious, and they wanted to take over the Democratic party, and my good friend Newton Miyagi [of the ILWU] from Waipahu, he was all out to go after the Democratic party. And when the party split, and [Ernest] Heen and his gang [the Democratic Old Guard] went up to [Veterans of Foreign Wars clubhouse], Jack Burns told us, "Stay put. Don't go."

LM: So they walked out . . .

MT: They walked out, and we stayed, and the ILWU boys stayed, you know. [The two factions, the "walkouts" and the "standpats" as they became known, each elected party officers and adopted platforms.] And we had a long talk with Jack Hall at that time, and told him that, to me, to us anyway, it's crazy for the ILWU to take over the Democratic party. So let us run the Democratic party and you support us with your union.

LM: So that was the result of the convention, that the veterans became the officers of the party?

MT: That's right. For one section of the party.

DT: This was true in '52 when it occurred, '50, there had been a split.

MT: Yeah.

DT: But in '52 it was put back together, and [Robert] Dodge was sort of the intellectual person . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . who was able to put the platform together in anticipation of what no one really expected, that happened, anyway, in '54.

LM: So how did you raise the money for these campaigns?

MT: Primarily among the workers, you know, because Merchant Street [the business sector] wasn't contributing that heavily. And some of our few businessmen who were Democratically inclined, you know—but mostly very small amounts from the individuals out there.

LM: So from the party workers themselves?

MT: Party workers, you know. And the . . .

LM: So did, how about—did you have fundraisers? Did they raise much, or did they usually just break even?

MT: We had fundraisers, luaus [*lū'au*], and so forth, but you know, ten dollars a ticket, you cannot make too much, or five dollars a ticket, you know.

DT: Calabash worked pretty well, as I recall. Every time you had a meeting . . .

MT: Yeah, every time we had a meeting, we had a calabash.

LM: Just pass it around.

MT: Dollar, five dollars, you know, whatever.

DT: And then something was introduced, was it not, and I think you started using it in '54, too, for Jack [Burns] and other Democratic candidates, and that was a coffee hour.

MT: That's right. That's right.

LM: And you would ask for contributions at the coffee hours.

MT: At the coffee hours, people would contribute. And the coffee hours were very long, drawn-out affairs. We started very early, you know. And what we were trying to do with the coffee hours is . . .

LM: I think we're running out. I do want to ask you about those, so let's go and switch tapes, okay, because I think that's important.

MT: Yeah.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-19-1-89; SIDE ONE

JC: The following is videotape number five, continuation of the Mike Tokunaga interview, September 12, 1989.

LM: When did you start the coffee hours, and how did you work them?

MT: I would say we started the coffee hours in the 1954 campaign when Jack Burns ran for delegate. And we . . .

LM: He wasn't known to the general public, then, huh?

MT: He ran once in '48, but he lost to Joe Farrington. And nobody knew him. And we started the coffee hours about one year before the elections of 1954. And we went house to house. And what we started at that time was, we started accumulating a list of workers, helpers, contributors, and created a card file. Because most people who come to the [campaign] headquarters says, "Hey, what can I do? I want to help." And we used to turn around and give them a mimeograph sheet, you know, where they'll put—they'll make contact [with] twenty-five people, and just ask them to vote for Jack Burns. If they said yes, we list them in the files. Then we follow it up later to find out if they're willing to work or whatever the case, or contribute, or whatever.

LM: Would you contact the twenty-five people also, that they pulled in?

MT: Yeah. After the list is sent in, we asked the person who made the contact to go back and find

out if any one of these guys want to go house to house or contribute or whatever, you know. And we kept on building on that file, and I would say in the '54 elections, maybe we had about 6[000], 7,000 names, you know, territory-wide.

LM: When you started, say, a year ahead, you started, how many names did you have?

MT: I would say from among the Democratic party list, maybe we had about 2,000 names.

LM: So you went from 2,000 to 6,000 in one year?

MT: Yeah. And we kept on building that list, so now, I think, John Waihee has about 45,000 names in a computer. And the computer would tell us, contributor, house-to-house worker, sign holder, you know.

LM: And so, where was the emphasis? Not too much sign waving there yet.

MT: No.

LM: Mostly door to door, mostly coffee hours?

MT: Mostly contacting their friends, relatives, you know, and asking them to vote for Jack Burns. We feel that holding signs, going house to house, we have to do it. But it's not a vote-making process, you know. The best vote-making process is to contact your friends, relatives.

DT: In '54, you may recall, you had a lot of signs in people's yards, So the Outdoor Circle hadn't really revved up their campaign [to prohibit signs in yards], yet. And holding signs didn't come in until . . .

MT: Yeah, holding signs hadn't come in.

DT: . . . Charlie [Charles M.] Campbell [ran for office in the 1960s].

LM: So we're talking about signs, you sort of put the signs in your yard?

MT: Yeah, we had three-feet-by-six-feet banners, and we put them up in people's yards. And that's when the Outdoor Circle started screaming that there were too many signs out there, and some people don't take them down after the campaign, you know. And the city board of supervisors, at that time, started thinking about limiting the putting up of signs.

LM: How about raising the money in these later phases? Did you start to get money from businessmen and so forth in '54?

MT: In '54, very little. Very little. In '56, it was not that much, but there were some—and he's gone already, so I can tell you. [William H.] "Doc" Hill used to send us \$500 every campaign. And the only reason why Doc Hill used to send us \$500 was because the \$500 came through [Robert] McElrath from the ILWU, you know. Doc Hill wanted to let McElrath know that he's contributing to Jack Burns' campaign, so the ILWU would look upon Doc Hill with favor. And we used to have that kind of a contribution here and there. And businessmen who were known Republicans, you know, used to come in through the anonymous route.

And I remember in 1959 [in the first statehood elections], I think it was Malcolm MacNaughton [president of Castle & Cooke] representing the Big Five, told Jack Burns that, "If you run for the U.S. Senate [rather than governor], I'll give you \$50,000 from Merchant Street."

LM: To get rid of him.

MT: Yeah, to get rid of him, you know. And Jack Burns turned him down.

DT: Nevertheless, in '54, you came very close to winning.

MT: In '54, I never believed it in the beginning. Burns was the only guy who had some faith in winning, you know. We used to campaign hard, and Burns always used to remind Dan Aoki and I that if we work hard and we work it right, we can win. And that's the reason why Dan Aoki and I went to see Jack Hall for \$3,000 right at the end of the campaign.

LM: You guys had run out of money?

MT: We ran out of money. We couldn't buy an ad, you know. And Jack Hall said, "Instead of giving you \$3,000," he says, "the ILWU will put an ad in." We told him, "We don't want an ILWU ad." Because the ILWU was kind of tainted at that time, you know, thanks to people like Frank Fasi and (chuckles) . . .

LM: Because they were calling them Communists?

MT: Yeah. There were—they had their hearings [the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Senate Internal Security Committee hearings], you know. And so Jack Hall says, "If I'm going to give you \$3,000," he says, "I might as well take the \$3,000, throw it in the toilet bowl and flush it," you know. He says, "I'll never get it back and Jack is not going to win."

LM: So Jack [Burns], just through the coffee hours and the talks, he just gradually won over the voters?

MT: Gradually worked it up, and we lost by 880 [890] votes.

LM: What sort of things would he say to those people when he had the coffee hours or the rallies? What would he say?

MT: He was trying to put across the fact that we need a Democrat, you know. The Republicans had been working for statehood for twenty years, and they've never accomplished it. And his pitch was, "Why not try a Democrat?"

LM: Oh. Democratic Congress at the time.

MT: Yeah, Democratic Congress.

DT: Well, as you may recall, too, the platform of '52 served very well, almost everybody, including Jack Burns in '54.

MT: That's right.

DT: The tax reform, education, was a pretty major factor, land reform . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . and I think all of you, I think you were pushing this for Jack, were you not? In other words, he talked about destiny.

MT: Mm hmm.

DT: I think, may I—excuse me, I'm sorry, if I may interject here, I think there was an organization of growing influence and that was HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees' Association]. I believe you have very close ties with HGEA.

MT: I was working for the HGEA.

DT: Okay. And so this . . .

MT: In '56.

DT: . . . probably made the difference between '54 and '56 . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . as the HGEA began to feel its oats as a political factor. And you stayed with them most of your career, didn't you?

MT: No, in '56 to '62.

DT: As a—on paid staff?

MT: As a paid staff.

DT: But in terms of staying with them as an organization?

MT: As an organization.

DT: Until you retired . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . you're probably go in the retired group right now, don't you?

MT: That's right. That's right.

LM: So just backing up a tad, what were those planks from the '52—on the platform that were resonating best with the voters and why?

MT: One was land reform. And I don't know whether John Hulten [a consultant on land and tax matters, later a state legislator] was active or not, but I remember in one campaign, John Hulten was pushing the land reform.

LM: Mm hmm.

MT: And . . .

LM: What do you mean by land reform?

MT: His approach was to open up more land so that the medium-income people can get hold of a piece of land for their house. And that's the year, I forgot what year it was [1958], but he almost beat [David] Hebden Porteus. You know, in the [territorial] senate race. And . . .

LM: How about the tax reform? What was the proposal there?

MT: Tax reform was primarily on real property tax, that the so-called independents were paying too much, or the small landholder was paying too much, and the big sugar companies were not paying enough. The estates were not paying enough, you know. And this was the pitch. But you see, in 1956, I think the thing that turned the tide for Jack Burns as delegate was, we got a letter from Edith Green, I think Representative Edith Green was from Oregon, a Democrat. And she sent us a Drew Pearson article. And the Drew Pearson article said that Betty Farrington was very happy when the statehood bill got recommitted.

LM: When it was stopped, you mean?

MT: Yeah. And when the statehood bill was recommitted, Betty Farrington made some kind of remark in Washington, that now we can rest, you know. And Drew Pearson wrote that article, and Drew Pearson articles used to appear in the [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*]. But that article never appeared in the *Star-Bulletin*. (LM laughs.) And when Edith Green sent us that article, we printed 150,000 copies of that and mailed it all over.

LM: Wow.

MT: And I think in the '56 election, that's what did it, you know, because Burns won by [more than] 15,000 votes.

LM: You printed 150,000. You mailed them or gave them out as . . .

MT: Most of it, we handed out house to house. But in the difficult areas, we just mailed it, you know, in Waikīkī, for instance.

LM: And so [at] that time, everyone was for statehood.

MT: You know, they were gung ho about statehood, and in 1957—let me tell you a personal experience. In 1957, I went to San Francisco for the Democratic Party regional convention at the Fairmont Hotel. And while I was there, Jack Burns was a delegate, and he came out of Washington [D.C.], he came to the convention. And one night, he says, "What are you doing tonight?"

I say, "Nothing."

He says, "Come to dinner with me."

So [we] went to the Matson Building, you know, San Francisco, and we had dinner up there. They had a restaurant up there in the Matson Building. And Lorrin Thurston, chairman of the statehood commission, and Jan Jabulka, who was a representative of the statehood commission in Washington were there. And Jack told them that he was going to, number one, change the enabling act bill to an admissions bill. See, all these years, Sam [i.e., Samuel Wilder King] King and Joe Farrington were putting in so-called enabling acts. And that enabling act enabled the territory of Hawai'i to get permission from the Congress to come back and devise a constitution for the territory of Hawai'i, and then go back and ask them for admission with that constitution. Jack says, "Why should we do that? You gotta go through Congress twice." So he says, "I'm going to put in an admissions bill, and we're going to take the Republican constitution," which was drafted in 1950, "and we're going to say this is the constitution we want. And go in—because we can always amend the constitution later. So, one shot, we'll become a state." The second thing that Jack did was, he told Lorrin Thurston and Jan Jabulka, "We're gonna push Alaska first."

LM: Trade-off, sort of.

MT: Yeah, trade-off. And immediately Lorrin Thurston and Jan Jabulka objected, you know. And Jack told them that, number one, we have tried Hawai'i first, we couldn't make it. We have tried Hawai'i and Alaska together, we never made it. And they're always blaming the Southern senators. So he said we're going to try Alaska first. And Jack told them, the reason we want to try Alaska first is Alaska has only two arguments against them, real or unreal. Number one, small population, and number two, noncontiguity. They're not worried about the Eskimos, you know.

But Hawai'i has four arguments against them. Whether we believe it or not, the people in Congress, some of them believe it. Small population, noncontiguity, too many Orientals, and too many communists. And we agreed, you know. Burns told us right after he got elected, he's going to do that.

So we agreed, and that night while he was trying to convince Jan Jabulka and Lorrin Thurston, those two didn't buy it. And after three hours, Burns gave up and said to the two, "I'm not asking for your support, I'm just telling you what I'm going to do," you know. But, he told both of them, "I don't want you folks to mention anything about this discussion, because I want to keep it down, and I don't want this whole thing to be blown out of proportion, especially on Alaska first." And my good friend Lorrin Thurston comes back to Honolulu, editor [Thurston was the publisher] of the [*Honolulu Advertiser*], and he writes an editorial, you know. And I called him up on the phone, and I called him all kind [of] names. (Laughs) But the strategy worked. The strategy worked because Burns's attitude was, if they give it to Alaska, they cannot turn us down. They cannot turn us down.

LM: How did he diffuse the communism and racial . . .

MT: The communism and racial thing, he, in (1953), Burns invited Russell Long from Louisiana [to Hawai'i], Senator Russell Long. And we had a party at our house, you know. And I told

Burns, "Eh, this guy been voting against statehood all these years, and why you want to bring him," as a keynote speaker for the Democratic party convention in (1953), you know.

And Burns says, "We gotta change him. We gotta change his mind." "And if," he says, "he's going to vote for statehood, eh, he's a leader in the South, he's going to bring the Southerners with him." So I told him, "Eh, that's a big gamble," you know.

So we had this party, started at six o'clock in the evening at my house, and we started working on Russell Long, you know. And during the evening, Russell Long says, "Eh, wait a minute. You guys says you are for civil rights." And he says, "We Southerners don't like civil rights." But he says, "Let me show you something." And he told me, "Mike, bring me the *Star-Bulletin*." So I brought the *Star-Bulletin*, and Russell Long reads right out of the ads, "*Haole* secretary wanted, Japanese sales-clerk wanted," you know. He says, "How can you be for civil rights, you right out in the open." And this discussion ran until two o'clock in the morning. And finally, Russell Long says, "I tell you what," he says, "I cannot—tomorrow morning when I give that speech at the Democratic convention, I cannot say that I'm going to support statehood," you know, "my constituents will kill me if I go back." So he says, "I will say at least that I will vote for statehood from now on."

I told him, "Good enough," you know.

And we all shook hands and the following morning, he made a big statement, it made a headline, you know . . .

LM: What sort of arguments did you use on him?

MT: We told him, fairness, you know. "You don't like us because we are for civil rights, you know, and you Southerners are not. And you think that we're going to be on the wrong side of the aisle when our senators go down there, and our house members go down there. We're going to be on the opposite side of Louisiana." And we told Russell Long, "You cannot peg us like that." We told him that we think that the people of Hawai'i are much more fair than the guys in Louisiana, and you gotta trust us. And the second thing he did, which I think was more important was, he told us that he was going to send Lehleitner—I don't even know how to spell his name. [George] Lehleitner, one of the businessmen from Louisiana, to Hawai'i to gather some material and go down there and make contact with the Southern senators, to swing their vote. And we told him, "Good," you know.

LM: This guy was a lobbyist or something?

MT: Lehleitner was a lobbyist, you know. And we invited—I don't know whether it was the same year or not, we invited Mike Kirwin, chairman of the ways and means committee in the House, you know. And we had a party at my house again, and we asked for Mike Kirwin's support. And Mike Kirwin says okay, you know. He says, "Jack has been nice to me," you know, and this guy was a power in the House because he was the chairman of the ways and means. And he gathered some votes for us. The other one who really helped us was Lyndon Johnson [in the Senate]. He had Bobby Baker, I'm sure you remember him, he had Bobby Baker going around and lining up the votes, you know. And I remember when Dan Aoki called me, the day before the vote in the Senate, Dan Aoki said, "Bobby Baker says we got seventy-eight votes out of ninety-eight, so we're in." So Dan Aoki says, "Get ready for the

statehood elections," you know.

(Laughter)

MT: And it turned out, I think he was about one vote shy, I think. I forgot what the vote was, but he was right there.

DT: I think we'd better stop tape.

LM: For the tape.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is videotape number six, continuation of the Mike Tokunaga interview. This is the last tape for this particular afternoon of interviewing.

LM: Before, I'm curious how—was each guy sort of running his own race or was the party coordinating them?

MT: Yeah, what we did was, take Dan Inouye. Henry Giugni used to support Jack Burns. And we told Henry Giugni and Shigeto Kanemoto to handle Dan Inouye's campaign, you know. So, those two went over there. But we co-mingled the Burns' workers and Dan Inouye's workers, you know. So, wherever they went, house to house, they carried the brochures . . .

LM: For both guys.

MT: The both, you know.

DT: Yeah, but I think you did, as a party, and I think the press would show that the Democrats were for the first time really campaigning as a party.

MT: As a party.

DT: And went out together, and that's what led to the so-called 'Āina Haina debate [in the 1954 elections] . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . if you remember, when Dan Inouye, sort of the first time he took on . . .

MT: Sam King.

DT: . . . Sam King, Jr. [Samuel P. King]. (Laughs) So this was sort of the result of the [Robert] Dodge basic platform . . .

MT: I think that was the first campaign the party came up with ads, one page, all the Democrats. And it gave a team concept.

LM: And had you been doing a lot of voter registrations, too?

MT: Yeah.

LM: When did you say your mother and father first voted?

MT: I forgot. In late, either late [19]40s or early [19]50s.

DT: Probably in '52, my guess would be, because of the McCarran Act.

MT: McCarran Act was, yeah, '52.

LM: So the McCarran Act came out in '52, so that allowed you to register a lot more people, too.

MT: Yeah, that's right. A lot more.

LM: So did you have actual voter registration campaigns and stuff?

MT: See, what we did was, we told the Democratic workers to go out and register their parents, you know. And most of them registered. And by then, we were putting the Democratic . . .

LM: With 6,000 workers, that's 12,000 parents right there, yeah?

MT: Yeah, yeah. And no, 6,000 was, a lot of them were husbands and wives, so.

LM: Oh, I see.

MT: And what we did with the older folks was, see, the Japanese have *kenjinkai*, you know, prefecture organizations. And we had people move into that prefecture organizations and sell the idea. And we used all kinds of organizations, you know, to organize.

LM: All the neighborhood organizations . . .

MT: Neighborhoods.

LM: Religious organizations, like that.

MT: Yeah. Religious organizations, very difficult, you know, nobody wants to talk politics.

LM: *Kenjinkai*, you call it?

MT: Yeah, *kenjinkai*. In other words, the Hiroshima *kenjinkai*, the Fukuoka *kenjinkai*, you know, they all have different—the prefectures have different organizations.

DT: I think you may have overlooked . . . I think from the word go, until, well, all through his campaign for governor, the one thing that Jack [Burns] was really strong on was education.

MT: That's right, that's right.

LM: Yeah, we didn't ask about that part.

DT: And you may want to talk about that because certainly that came into the situation, particularly in '62.

MT: See, Burns pushed education because he felt that the administration and the legislature under the Republican regime, they didn't care whether the kids had a good education or not. I remember going to a senate hearing once, and we were . . .

LM: We're out of tape? How long is there between tapes?

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: We're rolling.

LM: Oh, you didn't tell me. I'm sorry.

MT: So anyway, I remember going to a hearing when the Republicans were in control, and people were pushing for better schools and so forth, you know, better university [University of Hawai'i]. And Ben [Benjamin F., II] Dillingham, right in the open, came out and said that, "If you want to go to a good school, why don't you be like my parents and send the kids to Harvard." And he said this right out in the open, you know. And we used that line, we used that line, I would say, from the early [19]50s, all the way through the campaign.

DT: I think you used another one, too. Remember, he said the people of Hawai'i should quit having children like rabbits.

MT: That's right, that's right, that's right.

(Chuckles)

MT: He said, "How can we keep up with creating better schools when you folks are having kids like rabbits," you know. (Chuckles) And we used those kinds of statements by the Republicans. And if you took the plantation family, most of them aspire for their kids to go to the university [University of Hawai'i]. And because of the economic situation and not too many scholarships, most of the kids in my generation had very little chance of going to the university. Fortunately, the GI Bill came in. And if the GI Bill wasn't there, I wouldn't have gone to the university.

DT: At any rate, statehood did come, maybe a surprise to some, but it came in '59, and that opened the door to one of your greatest disappointments, I think, because you'd been successful in '56 and '58 [in Burns' races] for delegate, and here you were, fighting a big campaign for governor.

MT: That's right.

DT: You want to talk a little bit about that?

MT: Okay. Let me talk about the governorship in 1959. When we got statehood, Jack—I mean, Dan Aoki was the first one who called me and told me what the results of the votes were. And that was about seven o'clock in the morning. And Dan told me to get ready for the

statehood elections, you know. And I told Dan, number one, Burns has to come back for the celebration, and he has to take all the credit. And number two, we gotta line up a ticket, who's going to run for U.S. Senator, who's going to run for U.S. House, who's going to run for governor, you know.

And Burns was on the other line, and Burns says, "I cannot make it home. So on the celebration, I won't be there," you know. And I asked him why. He says, "I'm working on Lyndon Johnson to introduce the East-West Center bill in the [U.S.] Senate." And he says, "If Lyndon would introduce the East-West Center bill, the bill is going to pass, and that's \$10 million for the state of Hawai'i."

And I told Jack, "Eh, never mind about the East-West Center, that can wait," you know.

And he says, "No, no, no," he says, "this is a terrific opportunity to get an East-West Center in Hawai'i," and he says, "I want to work on it."

So he didn't come back for the celebration. And he stayed back there, and worked on Lyndon Johnson, and Lyndon Johnson finally introduced the bill for us, you know. And I think that's the main reason why we got the East-West Center at the University of Hawai'i.

Now, when Burns came back, he was going to come back secretly, just to file his papers. And I told Jack, "Eh, you're crazy, who's not going to recognize you?" And Don Horio was—Don Horio [who later served as Governor Burns' press secretary] was a reporter at that time, and Don Horio heard the rumor that Burns was going to come back, and Don met him at the airport. And Burns looked like a fool, you know, trying to sneak in the state, file his papers and run back. And all of this kind of thing, kind of muddled the situation.

DT: I was going to ask, I never had a chance to talk to you about this, but not only did he sneak into town, but they caught him with front page pictures at a massage parlor, remember?

(Laughter)

DT: How do you feel about that?

LM: Wait, wait. Tell us the story. They caught Jack coming out of a massage parlor?

DT: No, he was in the massage parlor.

MT: He was in the massage parlor, and they caught him in the massage parlor, you know. His old friend [Henry S.] Okazaki was giving him a massage at Nikko Massage [Nikko Restoration Sanatorium]. And Jack always went to Nikko Massage every Friday afternoon. So when he comes back, he always does that, go to the massage parlor. And Mr. Okazaki even massaged Lyndon Johnson at the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel], you know, when Lyndon Johnson wanted a massage.

But anyway, all of this—and then Dan Inouye, all of a sudden, Sunday night, he calls me up and Dan Inouye says, "Brian Casey [reporter for one of Honolulu's dailies] has been asking me what am I going to run for," you know. And Dan Inouye says, "I'm inclined to run for the U.S. Senate," you know, and he asked me, "What do you think?"

And I told Dan Inouye, "Dan, check with the old man in Washington, see what he says."

And Dan says, "I'm in touch with him." He didn't say whether Burns said yes or no, he just told me, "I'm in touch with him," and I says, "Okay," you know. And this was Sunday night, and Monday morning it hit the papers, "Dan Inouye running for U.S. Senate."

Seven o'clock Monday morning, I get a phone call from Washington, D.C. And Jack is on the line, he says, "What is that one-arm bandit doing?"

And I tell him, "Eh, he told me he was in touch with you guys," and Dan Aoki on the line says, "Like hell he is."

And so, we had a long discussion on the ticket, and Burns said, "We're going to have Bill Heen and Oren Long for U.S. Senate, two senior Democrats. Then we're going to have Dan Inouye for the House."

So I [told] him, "Eh, Dan Inouye can beat Oren Long or Bill Heen," you know.

He says, "Wait, wait." He said, "If Dan Inouye wants to be a politician until he's ninety years old, tell him [to] run for the House because on the Republican side, Charlie Silva is running, and Charlie is nobody compared to Dan Inouye. And Dan is going to beat him by 50,000 votes. And from that election on, nobody will run against Dan, no matter what he runs for."

So I told him, "Terrific, you know. Dan can be a senator for life."

So he says, Burns says, "I'm going to send Dan Aoki home, and I want you and Dan Aoki to work on Dan Inouye to go for the House seat."

And I told Jack, "Eh, it's not an easy job," you know.

So Dan Aoki came home, and Dan Aoki and I went after Dan Inouye for two whole weeks, you know, trying to get him to move to the House. And finally Dan Inouye says—after he said, "My banners are printed."

We said, "We'll pay for it."

"My bumper stickers are printed."

"We'll pay for it," you know.

And after we covered him all the way, Dan Inouye says, "Well, how about Maggie, what do you think Maggie's going to say?"

And Dan Aoki says to Dan Inouye, he says, "You know, you always told us that you are a samurai. Samurai take care their wives. Don't ask us to go take care your wife." So, (chuckles) and Dan Inouye ran for the House.

DT: Apparently this was in pursuit—and Jack told me this himself—that he felt very strongly he

had to have a balanced ticket.

MT: That's right.

DT: And to have the ticket balance out right, why, he had to have the ticket that you mentioned. But in this process, you incurred another small problem which didn't help with '59 race for you. Somebody got angry. Patsy Mink, right?

(Laughter)

LM: Why did Patsy get mad?

MT: Patsy announced for the House first, you know. So we told Dan Inouye, we—Dan Aoki and I—we'll go talk to Patsy Mink. Patsy Mink, when she first ran for the house of representatives, territorial government, she was going to run from the fourth district because she used to live on (17th) Avenue, I think. And we told Patsy, "You crazy. You should run from the fifth district, you know, on the other side of Nu'uani Avenue."

DT: The country or the plantation area.

MT: Yeah, the plantation area. And Dan Aoki and I went to see Chinn Ho, and Chinn Ho provided her a house at Shangri-la in Mākaha. And Patsy moved her family out there, and she ran for the [territorial] house the first time, and she got elected from out there, you know. So when she came in conflict with Dan Inouye, Dan and I—Dan Aoki and I—thought we can go talk to her. After all, you know, we thought she was our protege. So we went to see Patsy, and Patsy said . . .

JC: Can we stop? We need to get the mike to pick it up. Okay so you can overlap a bit.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

LM: You went to see Patsy Mink.

MT: Okay, so Dan Aoki and I went to see Patsy Mink, and Patsy Mink says, "Who told you folks that I cannot beat Dan Inouye?"

And I told Patsy, "Eh, Patsy, look at the votes," you know, the past votes. "Look at the votes. No way can you beat Dan Inouye." And we suggested she stay in the state, state senate, and later on when there's a vacancy, we'll go out and support her if she wants to run for Congress one of these days.

She said no, you know, and she stayed in that race, and she lost to Dan Inouye, I think, quite a bit of margin. But the thing that destroyed her the most was, I understand, she mortgaged her house, and financially she went down.

And so Dan [Inouye] ran. We took Dan Inouye and Oren Long, you know, to Kanraku, the teahouse. And Dan Inouye told us that if he's going to move from the Senate race to the House race, he wants to have a talk with Oren Long. And Oren Long was telling us that all he wants is one term in the Senate, and that's all because he's too old. And we said, okay, so

why don't we sit down with Dan Inouye and you tell Dan Inouye that. So we went to Kanraku, and Oren Long told Dan Inouye all he wants is one term, you know. And after that one term, he will support Dan Inouye. So we told him it's a deal, and we shook hands, nothing in writing, we shook hands, and we parted.

But when Oren Long got elected and he pulled his straw, he pulled a short term, three years, and Hiram Fong got the six years. And you know, when you become a U.S. Senator, your ego get bloated, and you want to be in there for as long as you can be in there. And he came back in 1962, '64 I think, yeah. And he came back—no, he came back in '62, '59 and '62. He came back in '62 and he wanted to run again, you know. And he contacted Burns, he contacted Dan Aoki, he contacted myself, he contacted, I think, Shigeto Kanemoto—all the people who were at the Kanraku—and told us he wants to run again. And we all told him, "Oren, a deal is a deal. If you want to run, that's your prerogative. But we're all going to support Dan." And he went down to see Jack Hall [regional director of ILWU], and Jack Hall says, no, no way. Dan Inouye. And with his doctor's approval, he pulled out.

LM: Let me ask you one quick question about '54. You said suddenly that year you had enough candidates, how come?

MT: They, most of them, were in law practice, and pretty much settled down. Some of them were in the county attorney's office, and they had enough financial backing to go out and try their luck, you know, in the private area.

(Telephone rings.)

LM: And the party had enough money to run party events and party ads?

MT: Party never had money, party never had money.

LM: How would you do, say, the newspaper party slate ad?

MT: Yeah, whatever party money we raised was used, primarily, for newspaper. Not too much radio or TV.

DT: If we can get back to '59. You lost that race, probably because you ended up with the top of a ticket: Long, [Frank] Fasi, Inouye and Burns, right? And so Burns and Fasi were the ultimate casualties, so you ended up with Long and Fong, and Inouye, and Bill [William F.] Quinn.

MT: Yeah, let me tell you my analysis of the '59 campaign. We all wanted Burns to go [for the] U.S. Senate. We figured that was the easiest race, especially Dan Aoki and myself, because we were campaign managers, you know. And I felt for Mrs. [Beatrice] Burns. I felt that if Burns ran for governorship, and if he lost—or even if he won—she had to pack up and come all the way back from Washington, D.C. You know, she's in a wheelchair. So, for Mrs. Burns' sake, I wanted Burns, Jack Burns, to run for U.S. Senate, then she doesn't have to move. And that race was a cinch for him. But after we had this meeting at Herman Lemke's office, about eighteen of us, and we all gave our opinion, you know, and Jack Burns finally came out and said he's going to run for governorship. He says, "I thank you guys all for your opinion," he says, "I'm going to run for the governorship because if you want to build the

Democratic party up, we gotta take the governorship," you know. "And if I just want to bloat my ego," he says, "I will run for the U.S. Senate. But I gotta run for the governorship for the Democratic party." So he ran.

As Dan [Tuttle] says, we had Frank Fasi, who ran against Bill Heen and beat Bill Heen in the primary, because of Bill Heen's age. And the ILWU did not like Frank, so they couldn't buy all of the ticket. And we were trying to tell Jack Hall, "Eh, never mind about Frank Fasi, concentrate on the governorship," you know. And the ILWU was so determined to beat Frank Fasi, they spent most of their time going after Frank Fasi and supporting Hiram Fong. They thought Burns was a cinch for the governorship. And we told him [Hall] no, the survey doesn't show it.

Now, just before the general election, Bill Quinn came out with a proposition, that if he is elected governor, he was going to create the Second *Mahele* and give everybody fifty dollars an acre of land if they want to buy state land, piece of state land, and he's going to sell it for fifty dollars an acre. And you know, land-hungry citizens of Hawai'i just took it and swallowed it. And it wasn't by much, though, I think it was about 3,500 [4,138] votes I think.

DT: In a close election, but I'm afraid because we're running out of tape, we probably have to adjourn. The best is yet to come, in '62, results were different, weren't they?

MT: That's right.

(Laughter)

LM: Okay, we'll (tape inaudible).

MT: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 17-20-2-89 and 17-21-2-89

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mike Tokunaga (MT)

October 17, 1989

Honolulu, O'ahu

BY: Larry Meacham (LM) and Daniel W. Tuttle, Jr. (DT)

Joy Chong: The following is the second session interview with Mike Tokunaga. Interviewers are Larry Meacham and Dan Tuttle. The interview took place on October 17, 1989. This is videotape number seven.

Okay, Larry, anytime.

LM: Tape number seven, second session. I wanted to go back and ask you two quick questions, Mike.

MT: Okay.

LM: First, could you tell us the story about your father's picture of the emperor?

MT: Yeah, when the war broke out on December 7, 1941, my dad [Nobumi Tokunaga] had a picture of the emperor [Hirohito] hanging in the living room in Lahaina. And when I got drafted in November 1941, when I left, the picture was there on the wall. And when December 7th came around, I figured, you know, he was going to burn that picture because, you know, anything connected with the Japanese emperor was taboo. So, when I got back to Maui in February of 1942, on my first pass home, I went [home]. And where the emperor's picture was, I saw Franklin Delano Roosevelt, you know. And I asked my dad, "What did you do with the emperor's picture, did you burn it?"

And he says, he smiled, you know, and he looked at me and says, "No, no, no." He says, "I got the emperor's picture."

And I asked, "Where is it?"

He says, "The emperor is hiding behind Roosevelt."

(Chuckles) He had the emperor's picture in the back of Roosevelt's picture. And I laughed, but when you consider my dad, who's a first-generation Japanese from Japan, and when the war broke out, some of his best friends, who were connected with the church activity, got interned, you know, and got taken in. And I think, deep down inside of him, he was mad, you know, that the American government would do that to his good friends. And I think deep

down in himself, you know, he was still loyal to Japan, I think. But he wouldn't say it. He wouldn't say it, but that was my suspicion anyway.

LM: I was also curious, how'd you get your Purple Hearts?

MT: My Purple Heart, the first one, we were coming up a road where there was a wall about eight feet high on the right side. We were coming along the road, and up to a hedgerow, you know, and we knew that there was a ditch in the back of the hedgerow because all of the Italian landscape had this ditch where the donkeys and the carts traveled. And when we got up to about twenty-five yards from the hedgerow, a German jumped up from just beside the road and the hole was covered with a olive branch. We didn't see him when we got up there, I guess he was sleeping because we were right up there.

I was the first guy in line, I had already passed him, and I think when the third guy came up to him, he jumped out of his hole, and he raised his hand, and he says, "Comrade!" And he wanted to give up. And in the excitement, one of our boys shot him, you know, because our boys was just as scared as he was, you know. And when the first shot was fired, the machine gun to our left, about ten yards from where I was, opened up on us. Fortunately, he didn't hit me, he hit one of our boys in the leg, and we all jumped in the ditch. And we started firing back.

And then I saw two other Germans get out of the hole, and started to run, run away from the machine gun nest. And like a hero, you know, I charged the machine gun nest, thinking that I was going to turn the machine gun around and use it against them. And I found out that the reason why they ran was because the machine gun was jammed, you know, and it wouldn't fire. And the way I got hit was, while I was doing that, another German from behind the house fired at me with a machine pistol, which is an automatic, and one bullet went right through the top of my helmet, and opened my helmet wide open, and one bullet just grazed my cheek. And I was stuck in the hole. He had an automatic weapon, I had an M-1, you know, which was semi-automatic. I was stuck in the hole. So using my good Hawaiian ingenuity, I had already thrown two hand grenades right after I got to that machine gun nest, and I didn't have any hand grenades. So I picked up a rock, and I lobbed it at him, you know, behind the house, and I assumed that he was going to duck, thinking that it's a hand grenade. I went into the bushes, and the crazy guy stuck his head out from the building, and I hit him, you know, and it was only about thirty yards.

And then a tank came out from behind the house. And I called [Masao] Awakuni, the bazooka man, and I told the—pass the word down, get Awakuni up here, and Awakuni was about fifty yards in the ditch, down the road. And Awakuni came up with a bazooka, and he asked me, "Where's the tank?" and I told him (lowers voice), "Right here." And he opened the bushes, and looked at the tank, was right there, about fifteen yards from where he was. We could hear the Germans talking in the tank. And he put the bazooka up, and he told me to load it, so I loaded the bazooka, and I tapped him on the shoulder, I tell him, "Okay, fire," you know. And he puts his bazooka down. And I ask him, "What's the matter?"

He says, "My glasses are all fogged up," because you know with that army helmet, and he'd crawled fifty yards, he was sweating, and his eye glasses were all fogged up, he couldn't see. And this guy stutters, you know. You would think he's a nervous guy, but he's calm as a cucumber. And after he did that, he shot one shot, one bazooka round, and it penetrated the

front end of the tank. Fortunately, it was a very small Italian tank, I think about three-inch armor, and the bazooka penetrated. And we could hear the Germans, I think two of them, screaming like hell in the tank, you know. But that was the first time I got hit. But very minor. I had a lump on my head, and a burn on my cheek.

The second time I got hit was, I was lying in a hole, and they started firing mortar shells, and this was about, oh, four o'clock in the morning, maybe four or five o'clock in the morning. It was still dark. And I stuck my head out, and all of a sudden, a shell burst, oh, about six yards from where I was, and the shrapnel came flying at me. And I thought I got hit by a shrapnel, you know, because it was dark and I couldn't see. The only thing I could feel was—I was bleeding on my face, you know. And when daylight came, the guy who was in the next hole looked at me and says, "Eh, Mike, you lost that eye," you know, because one eye, my right eye, was all bloody, and he couldn't see my eyeball, you know. And what happened was, the shrapnel came to the stock of the rifle, the wooden part of the rifle, and splattered the wooden splinters in my face, you know. And one of the wooden splinters got into my right eye. And when I went to the hospital, the doctor tried to get it out with a magnet. He thought it was metal, you know, and it wouldn't come out because it was wood. And he got a tweezer and he pulled it out. I thought my eyeball came out with it, you know. But fortunately, it didn't hit the retina, you know, and I can see through it, and the only person who saw the scar was Dr. Fronk when I came back, you know. And that was the second time I got hit.

And the third time I got hit was very minor. I was lying in a ditch, and just as I stood up, holding my rifle in my left hand, you know, just as I stood up, a shell landed about ten yards from where I was, and a shrapnel hit me over here. And that was it. So, three times I got wounded. Very minor.

LM: So you were lucky, yeah?

MT: Yeah.

LM: I was curious about slate-making in the earliest elections. We talked to [Nelson] Doi and [Toshio] Serizawa and those guys, and I mean, their version is that, for one reason or other, they just decided to run. Did [John] Burns or you guys try to work on the neighbor island guys to get candidates out, decide who would run for what?

MT: No, I don't think Burns worked too much on the neighbor island people. I think the neighbor islands, mostly, when they decided to run, they had to check with the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] because they had to get ILWU support to get elected. And Burns was more interested and he concentrated on the fourth and fifth districts on O'ahu. And especially the fourth district where Dan [Daniel K.] Inouye and Masato Doi, Sparky [Spark M.] Matsunaga, Russell Kono, Anna Kahanamoku, and Herman Lum, and Willie [William H.] Crozier ran [in 1954]. And he wanted to take that because that was a Republican stronghold. And the only Republican that survived in that one, was [David] Hebden Porteus. The rest all got beat, you know, [Walter F.] McGuire and I forget some of the names.

LM: How about the fifth district? Did he work on slates there?

MT: No, the fifth district he worked on it, and he was trying to get, again, veterans, AJAs [Americans of Japanese Ancestry], lawyers to run, and George Ariyoshi was one of them. Of course my good friend, Charlie [Charles] Kauhane, you know he was an old perennial candidate, he ran, and I forgot who the others were, but Patsy Mink did not run that year. Patsy Mink ran in the following election [1956]. When she saw George Ariyoshi get elected, she figured, you know, "If George Ariyoshi can [get] elected, I can get elected." And she ran two years later.

LM: So all right, say in the '56 race, would Burns and you folks be pretty involved in the slate-making then?

MT: In the '56 race, we had no problem because most of them were incumbents. And what we were trying to do was take the delegateship. And '54, nobody gave Burns a chance of winning against [Elizabeth] Betty Farrington, you know, and I don't know whether I told you this story or not. We worked and worked and worked. Even I wasn't convinced that Burns could win in '54. But as the days went by, and Burns was the only one who was saying it could be done, it could be done. And as we worked on the campaign and going along, and going to the rallies, those days, we kind of got a feel that Burns was picking up, you know. And there was no sophisticated surveys those days. Oh, about two weeks before the general election, we ran out of money, you know, completely out of money. So Dan [Daniel T.] Aoki and I went down to see Jack Hall [regional director of the ILWU], and we wanted \$3,000 from Jack Hall, you know, from the ILWU.

And Jack Hall told Dan and I, "Eh, don't kid yourselves. Burns cannot get elected." He said, "If I give you \$3,000 I might as well put the \$3,000 in the toilet bowl and flush it," you know, "because you're not going to make it. And on top of that, if I give you \$3,000, you're not going to return it anyway."

So we never got the \$3,000, but he promised us that he would put in ads in the papers worth about \$1,500, you know. And we told him we don't want the ILWU label on the ad, because ILWU label would only solicit votes from the ILWU members, and we got those votes, you know, we need votes from the outsiders or independents. And Jack Hall, being a good union man, he put the two ads in with the union label on it, you know. And we lost by 880 [890] votes. And it was the first time and the last time I cried in a political campaign. (Chuckles)

DT: You can also build a case, we're talking about the '54 campaign, now. You can also build a case of the friction between [Frank] Fasi and Burns in that election, that may have cost them both any chance to be elected.

MT: Yeah, in the '56 election—or '54 election, Fasi ran against Mayor [John] Wilson [in the Democratic primary for mayor of Honolulu]. And was that the year he beat Wilson?

DT: He beat Wilson in '54.

MT: In '54.

DT: That's the year he lost in the general to [Neal] Blaisdell . . .

MT: That's right.

LM: . . . and Burns lost to [Elizabeth] Farrington.

MT: That's right. And when Fasi ran against Mayor Wilson, we refused to support him because we were supporting Johnny Wilson, you know, and there was a split. And when the general election came around, Fasi was running against Blaisdell, and the ILWU didn't care for Fasi, they were more interested in dumping Fasi because he was red-baiting the ILWU all the time. And I think Jack Hall felt that Jack Burns was a lost cause, you know, so he didn't put too much effort in the Burns campaign, and we lost by 880 [890] votes. And even one vote, you're a loser, you know.

LM: How about slate-making in the '58 and '59 races?

MT: The '56?

LM: [Nineteen] fifty-eight, '59 races?

MT: Okay. The '58, Burns came back from Washington, and did I tell you the story about Burns' strategy on getting statehood?

LM: Ah.

MT: When Burns got elected in '56, he took the position that he wanted Alaska in first.

LM: Right.

MT: Right. And he gave us the reasons, you know. Alaska had only noncontiguity and small population [as arguments against statehood], whereas, Hawai'i had noncontiguity and small population, too many Communists, and too many Japanese. And we don't believe it, but people in Washington believe it. And he got in [as delegate to Congress], and as soon as he got in, he got eighteen of us together at [Alexander] Young Hotel, and he told us, number one, "I'm going to change the bill from an enabling act to an admissions bill." And an enabling act will allow the [territory] of Hawai'i to come home, draft a constitution, go back to Washington and ask for admission. In other words, you got to go through Congress twice. And Burns said, "We're going [to] go through Congress only once because it's difficult enough to [go] through once." And he changed the bill to an admissions act, and he took the 1950 constitution, which was a Republican constitution, and he said, "We can live with it, and we'll take that constitution, and go in and ask for admission."

And the other strategy was, Alaska first, you know, because we had tried Hawai'i first, Alaska and Hawai'i together, we have never tried Alaska first. And the Southerners, as Betty Farrington and Joe [Joseph] Farrington always said, the Southerners were voting against Hawai'i, you know, primarily because of the liberal state that we had in Hawai'i, or liberal territory. And they knew that if civil rights question came up, we would be on opposite side of the Southern states.

So when Burns went up there, and I told you the story about how we talked to Russell Long and [George] Lehleitner and those guys. And when Burns went up there, he started working on Alaska first. And even Jan Jabulka, who was the representative in Washington for the statehood commission, and Lorrin Thurston, who was the chairman for the statehood

commission, didn't agree with that strategy, you know. And I told you, I think I told you, finally Jack Burns had to tell them, "I'm not asking for your support on this, I'm just telling you what I'm going to do," you know. And he pushed that idea, and Alaska became a state, 1958. And Burns had to come back and run for office.

Now, the [territorial] house and senate, more or less, the slate was all set because these were incumbent Democrats who were running again. And our biggest concern was whether Jack Burns can get reelected to go back to Congress. And the Republicans put up Farrant Turner, my old battalion commander [in the 100th Infantry Battalion], to run against Jack Burns because they figured Farrant Turner was the only Republican, non-Japanese, who can draw the Japanese votes, you know. And I told my friends at the Club 100, "Eh, tell the old man, he's crazy, he's crazy to run." See, he was secretary of [Hawai'i] which is a lieutenant governor's position at that time. And I told my friends down at Club 100, "The old man is crazy to give up that job to run for Congress because the Republicans are not going to take care of him if he loses." And he ran anyway, and we beat him by 15,000 [14,000] votes, almost exactly what we beat Betty Farrington by in 1956, about 15,000 votes.

And my good battalion commander, he got out of the secretary of [Hawai'i] position, and after the election, they offered him a Small Business Administration position, and I think that Small Business Administration position paid less than the secretary of [Hawai'i], you know, and I understand he was kind of disillusioned. He had \$9,000 in debt, you know, and the Republican party didn't help him to pay off the debt, and he had to mortgage his house and pay off that debt. And I think a year and a half later, the old man died. And so that particular election, we didn't have to worry about the other positions because the other positions were all set up, and we went after the delegateship.

LM: So the '59 [statehood elections], pretty much the same thing? You have enough incumbents so you're not really . . .

MT: That's right. [Nineteen] fifty-nine, we didn't have to worry, you know, all the incumbents running again.

LM: Okay, but '62, it becomes a little fancier. What happened?

DT: Wait, wait a minute. You're not—you're saying in '59 you had everybody in place? I mean, there was a lot of slate-making in '59.

MT: No, no, no. In '59, there was a lot of slate-making. But, I'm talking about the house and the senate. Most people, on their own, decided to run for the house or for the senate, but the top of the ticket, there was slate-making. And as [Nadao] Yoshinaga would say today, we gotta come out with a rainbow ticket, you know, good ethnic balance. And we came out with, of course, I told you the story of Dan [Daniel] Inouye wanting to go for the [U.S.] Senate.

DT: I think you told that before on the other tape, but there was a lot of slate-making at the top. For the legislature, you're correct, everybody was pretty well slotted in.

MT: That's right.

DT: We'll continue in just a moment after we've changed tapes.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is a continuation of the Mike Tokunaga interview. This is videotape number eight.

LM: Okay, tape number eight. I just want to finish 1959. You say you had a lot of incumbents in the territory in '58, lot of incumbents in the senate and the house. Wait, no, '59, lot of incumbents in the house and the senate already, but there was a fight at the top of the ticket.

MT: At the top of the ticket, yeah, there was a fight, and one of the incidents was that Tom [Thomas P.] Gill wanted to run for lieutenant governor in the '59 election. And Dan Aoki and I went to a meeting with Alvin Shim, Walter Heen, who represented Gill, and they invited Speaker Cravalho, Elmer Cravalho, and Nelson Doi, who was the president of the senate [Republican William "Doc" Hill was senate president in 1959]. And this meeting was in Elmer Cravalho's office, and Alvin Shim made the pitch, you know, how about accepting Tom Gill as the lieutenant governor. And before we went to the meeting, we discussed this with Burns, and Burns says no way, you know. And this is when he said, "You can't have two Bolsheviks running for governor and lieutenant governor." He says, "We're too controversial." So, the lieutenant governor gotta be a very non-controversial guy, you know.

Now, the other thing, we went looking around for an AJA [American of Japanese Ancestry] for a lieutenant governor because I think Sam [Samuel P.] King was a Republican candidate for governor, and he came up with Ralph Kiyosaki. And we figured we gotta match Ralph Kiyosaki, you know, and we looked at [Nadao] Yoshinaga, too controversial, you know. And we looked at George Fukuoka from Maui, very non controversial, you know, but what is he going to draw on O'ahu? He can't help on O'ahu, and Maui wasn't the whole election. So we came down to George Ariyoshi, and George became the candidate in the 1970 election. And wait a minute.

LM: Okay we're jumping ahead.

MT: I'm off times.

LM: All right, now, we're still talking '59 here.

MT: [Nineteen] fifty-nine?

LM: Yeah.

MT: Yeah. With '59, the lieutenant governorship was a three-way race with Mitsuyuki Kido, Richard Kageyama, and Sparky [Spark M.] Matsunaga. [Frank Serrao also ran for lieutenant governor in 1959.]

LM: So they just had to fight it out?

MT: They had to fight it out in the primary, and Mitsuyuki Kido came out the winner.

LM: Who did you guys, did you tilt one way or the other?

MT: Yeah, we were pulling for Mitsuyuki Kido, and we lost the friendship of Sparky Matsunaga and Richard Kageyama, consequently. I think it was a known fact that Burns wanted Kido because of the long association during the war with the—oh, I forget what the committee, the name of the committee [Emergency Service Committee]—and they had a committee to help the Japanese community, and Kido was one of them. And so, with the long association with Kido, he wanted Kido. And I think Burns had had in the back of his mind, that an AJA can get elected governor. And I think he wanted to see the day that Kido can get elected governor, you know, but it didn't work out.

DT: I might speculate here, and I would say that you didn't lose much by way of friendship with Kageyama, because I don't think he was even close to your camp in '59. But I think you did lose something with respect to Matsunaga.

MT: That's right.

DT: And this may have been a factor, too, why things didn't go right for Jack in the '59 governor's race.

MT: See, Matsunaga and Dan Aoki were roommates at Makiki Christian Church when they were going to the University of Hawai'i, you know, so their friendship goes way back. And Dan Aoki used to be a wrestler, and Sparky Matsunaga used to be a boxer for the University of Hawai'i team. And Dan Aoki made the mistake of putting on the gloves with Sparky, and Sparky beat him up one time, you know. But, Dan Aoki told [him], "I'll meet you in the wrestling match room," and Sparky was smart enough to say, "No, I don't want to wrestle."

(Laughter)

LM: Okay, so then in '62, you really smashed the Republicans.

MT: That's right.

LM: What was different that year, do you think, that enabled you to—I mean, before then, it's a tug-of-war. Why was '62 different?

MT: [Nineteen] sixty-two was easy because in the '59 elections, William Quinn knew that the race was very close. And one of the reasons I think we lost the '59 election was because Frank Fasi was running for U.S. Senate against Bill [William H.] Heen, you know, and he beat Bill Heen [in the Democratic primary election], and he ran against Hiram Fong [in the general]. And the ILWU went all out to get Frank Fasi. They assumed that Burns was a cinch because he got statehood for the state of Hawai'i. And they didn't put too much effort in the governor's campaign, and Dan Aoki and I were down there talking to Jack Hall, and told him, "Eh, you cannot ignore the governor's race, you know, it's not a cinch race." But whatever method we used, we were thinking the race was going to come down to the wire, you know.

And about two weeks before the general election, William Quinn promised every citizen in the state of Hawai'i who wants a piece of land, that the state of Hawai'i was going to sell each one, an acre of land for fifty dollars, you know. And the land hungry citizens of Hawai'i took a bite on it, and I think Quinn won by 3,400 or 3,500 votes [4,100 votes]. So he had to

produce, and he went to the legislature after he got in as governor, he went down to the legislature, which was Democratic. I think [David C.] McClung was the president [Doc Hill was president], and the speaker, I forgot who it was [Elmer Cravalho], but he went down to the legislature and tried to get a bill passed on the, what we call a Second *Mahele*. And the bill didn't slide.

DT: Well, the speaker was [Elmer] Cravalho, and the Republicans had the senate.

MT: Oh yeah.

DT: Remember? They had the senate.

MT: The Republicans had the senate. That's right. And that's why I don't remember the Republican—I mean, the senate side, but speaker was Cravalho. And because the bill didn't pass, in the '62 elections, we used that, you know, what happened to the Second *Mahele*? And that's all we did, right through the campaign, we asked the people, "What happened to the Second *Mahele*?" And we beat Quinn by something like 15,000—no, 30,000 votes [32,000 votes].

LM: Wouldn't that cut against the Hawaiian vote, though? The Hawaiians wouldn't have a good attitude toward the Great *Mahele* [Second *Mahele*].

MT: Well, the Hawaiians, I think, were more concerned about the Hawaiian Home Lands program, you know, and this was not the Hawaiian Home Lands program. This was an acre of land for fifty dollars for any citizen who wants it. And I understand the bill that Bill Quinn presented to the legislature was drawing lines on a map and selling the land, you know.

DT: Remember in '59, [James] Kealoha was on the ticket with a Republican winner for the Hawaiians, whereas, in '62, Kealoha had been defeated in the primary having lost to Quinn for the Republican governor's nomination. I'd like to toss a couple theories here, and you can shoot me down on them. I recall Jack [Burns] had had six or seven campaigns prior to his running in '62, after having lost in '59.

MT: That's right.

DT: This was the first time, as I recall it, that he ever used an outside public relations person, namely Bob [Robert G.] Alderman.

MT: That's right.

DT: What did you fellows, you and Dan [Aoki] and others, think about this?

MT: You see, in the campaign, all these years, we never really had public relations man, except—what's his name, Paul Beam, you know, and he was working with [Frank] Valenti. And they used to help us on a so-called part-time basis, you know, and this was all gratis, we didn't have the money to pay them.

DT: He was working with [Raymond] Milici, I think.

MT: Yeah.

DT: Not Valenti.

MT: Yeah.

DT: Yeah.

MT: Milici, yeah. Not Valenti, Milici. And consequently we really never hired a professional public relations man until Bob Alderman came in. Dan Aoki and I were strictly manpower, grassroots organization, you know. We couldn't be bothered with PR. And Bob Alderman really added to the campaign, you know, because he had to soften up Burns, and make the Stone Face smile a little, you know. And I don't know whether it was in the '62 campaign or later, "Catch a Wave," was produced.

LM: That's 1970.

MT: [Nineteen] seventy, yeah, against Tom Gill, that's right.

LM: So did Alderman get free media and stuff for—was there TV coverage yet?

MT: There was TV coverage, very little.

DT: I think you want to mention that there was a one, one-time debate. Quinn wanted several.

MT: That's right.

DT: But Alderman and Burns decided to go with just one.

MT: One.

DT: And they had that at KGMB. Do you remember that? Jack did pretty well, as I recall. I don't know how you recall it.

MT: Let me tell you my position, how I saw it. We met one night on the debate, when Quinn challenged Burns to a debate, and Quinn knew he was behind, you know. And we decided that we had to take him on once, you know, we cannot ignore him completely. So, we had to take him on once, but we were a little scared because Quinn was an attorney with a smooth mouth, and Burns was a policeman who's never had this kind of experience debating, you know.

And Matsy [Matsuo] Takabuki came up with the idea. Matsy Takabuki says, "Look, we gotta shake him up on the first question." And we did not want a moderator asking the questions, you know. Because they wanted a debate so bad, we knew they were going to accept any format that we asked for, and we asked for the candidate asking the question, and the candidate answering the question, any question. No holds barred. And Matsy Takabuki came up with the idea that we ask Bill Quinn the first question, "What would he do if we had a dock strike?"

And when Burns asked Quinn that question, Quinn got all shook up because he couldn't say he was going to bring in the National Guard, he didn't want to hurt the ILWU, you know. And he wanted to get the general public satisfied, but he didn't know how to do it, you know. And he scrambled around, and he never gave an answer. And from then on, we figured we had it, you know. And the other questions were all standard questions. And because Quinn was telling the public he wants a debate, he wants a debate, the public was expecting him to win the debate, you know. And our strategy was, all we had to do was, Burns to hold him to a draw, and Burns would come out a winner, you know, because the public would consequently say, "Hey, Burns isn't that bad." And that's what we did. And we held it right down to the—close to the general election.

DT: There were a couple of other factors, perhaps, you may or may not agree. Lyndon Johnson did visit out here.

MT: That's right.

DT: And this lent some support, did it not, (knocking in background) when you were down at the Hilton [Hawaiian Village].

(Taping interrupted.)

JC: Okay, anytime, Dan.

DT: We were talking about Lyndon Johnson's visit, he came to Hawai'i, and also made a large appearance or well-attended appearance at the Hawaiian Village Dome. This gave a lot of encouragement to your campaign, did it not?

MT: I remember that because when Lyndon Johnson came, we had a reception at the dome, and we invited something like 4,000 people. And Dan Aoki and I was given the job to identify every person who came in, you know, for the secret service. And once in a while, the secret service [would ask], "That guy, is he all right?"

"Yeah."

(Chuckles) How can we recognize 4,000 people? It was crazy. But Lyndon Johnson, being in the state, helped a lot, you know, because that added prestige.

LM: Had many presidents came to Hawai'i before?

DT: Well, he was vice president at the time.

LM: Oh okay, right, right.

MT: He was vice president at that time. [John F.] Kennedy came down as a senator, and . . .

DT: But this was telecast. Right, from the dome?

MT: Oh yeah, that's right, from the dome. It was telecast, and we had good coverage, and that gave the public the impression, anyway, that Burns had connections at the White House.

Kennedy wouldn't talk to Burns, because in the [Democratic] nomination [for President], Burns supported Lyndon Johnson, and Lyndon Johnson lost. And the reason why Burns supported Lyndon Johnson, was Lyndon Johnson was so helpful in getting statehood for us, and the East-West Center.

DT: There's one other factor, Mike, if I may, seemed to me that the Democrats realized it had a divided party in '59, let's face it, for part of the reasons of slate-making. The forces which were not all that comfortable with Jack Burns did, I think, reach an agreement that they would support Jack in '62. These would be people such as Walter Heen, David McClung, Tom Gill, among others.

MT: That's right.

DT: Didn't this really give you a strong basis for feeling that you would win the second time around? And didn't it also explain some of the reasons why McClung was given considerable prominence in the Burns administration along with Walter Heen, and perhaps some of the others who had been previously close to Gill?

MT: See, McClung and Walter were our contact with the Gill organization. And I remember in 1962, when Oren Long came back from Washington, Oren Long wanted to run for U.S. Senate, and we told him we're going to support Dan Inouye. No. That's right, yeah, in '62. And when Oren Long announced that he was not going to run for the U.S. Senate, McClung started proposing Oren Long for governor. And we sat down with McClung one day, and we told Mac, you know, "He cannot. Oren Long is too far gone in years, you know, and he's going to lose the election, you know, and with Burns, we can win." And I think, we felt anyway, that most of the people in Hawai'i felt sorry for Burns because he couldn't get elected in '59, you know, and I think they felt bad that they didn't elect Burns in '59. And the Second *Mahele* was a very simple issue, everybody understood it, you know, and we were pretty confident we were going to win.

LM: Did Alderman—what sort of things did Alderman do? Did you have any spots? Did you have any radio spots? Did you have any TV specials?

MT: Yeah, we had radio spots, TV ads, but not too much, you know. And newspaper ads, so Alderman was a one-man PR man.

LM: He arranged the press conferences and stuff like that?

MT: Arranged the press conference, everything.

LM: How did Jack take to this sort of manipulation?

MT: Jack was . . . You know, when Alderman says, you gotta appear on TV like this and that, and don't say this and don't say that, you know, Burns took it with a grain of salt. And he wasn't a good actor, you know, but I think Alderman helped. Alderman helped, and Burns kind of listened to him. And we had a professor from the university [of Hawai'i] who was giving Burns speech lessons, you know. I forget what his name was. But anyway, we had a professor of the university working with Burns on how to make speech deliveries, and how to appear on TV and so forth.

LM: And it helped?

MT: It helped, it helped.

LM: And you had unity behind the ticket in that year.

MT: That's right. We came to agreement anyway, that we had a good balanced ticket, and everybody was supporting it. As Dan [Tuttle] says, the people on the Gill side like McClung, Walter Heen—everybody was supporting the ticket.

LM: Why were they supporting the ticket that year, because everybody got the piece of the action they wanted?

MT: That's right, that's right. And at least they were on the team, you know, they had somebody on their team from all of the factions.

DT: Well, I think there was a feeling that they would eat one another up if they kept on with this . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . super factionalism. We're going to have to hold till we change tapes, and then we'll start talking about the '66 campaign.

MT: Okay.

JC: This is the end of tape number eight. Please turn the tape around for continuation.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JC: The following is a continuation of the Mike Tokunaga interview. This is videotape number nine.

LM: This is tape number nine. Could you tell us what you were doing in HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees Association]?

MT: I was a field representative making contact with the employees out in the field. And selling health insurance, and selling them the HGEA program, and why you should belong to a union. And those days, union was a bad word, so HGEA was Hawaiian Government Employees Association.

DT: You started that in what year, '56?

MT: I started in '56. And Dan Aoki and I went in about the same time. Dan was working at the apprenticeship council and labor department. And I was working at the employment service in

the labor department, same building, same department. And Dan and I went out there, we applied for the job, and through some of our friends on the board of directors, Dan and I got the job. And besides doing HGEA work, because we're political animals, we were always campaigning, you know.

And in '56, that was the second year Burns ran for delegate, second time Burns ran for delegate [Burns ran first in 1948]. Dan and I got Charlie [Charles R.] Kendall, who was the executive director of the HGEA—who comes from Kailua where Burns comes from, and they belong to the same Lions club—so HGEA was endorsing Burns all the time. And when campaign time got heated up, you know, Charlie Kendall would close his eyes, and Dan Aoki and I (chuckles) would go down to the headquarters, and work like a dog. And it was a good job for political contacts, because we [were] always meeting people and talking to people. And I'm not saying that that's the reason why Jack Burns got elected, but it helped quite a bit.

LM: So supposing you were—how would you approach someone you knew through HGEA?

MT: Well, what we would do, what Dan and I would [do] is, if we have an official HGEA meeting, we wouldn't talk politics at the meeting. But after work, we would call this guy, you know, and we would pick out the leaders from all the departments, and work on them. We even joined the PTA [Parent Teachers Association], you know. And we had all our friends join the PTA, and control the PTA by schools. We went to the state [PTA] convention in Wailuku, Maui, and we got all our friends elected officers, you know, and underhandedly, they were campaigning, you know.

LM: So you would call up the main contacts, and what would you say to them? Give me a for instance, call somebody up, what would you say? I'm wearing a different hat, or what would you say?

MT: What I would tell them is that, "This is off hours, you know, and I want to talk politics to you." And we discussed politics, and I would ask him if he would support Burns, you know. And usually, 90 percent of the time, we get a yes answer, because most independents out there lean to the Democratic ticket. And I guess the plantations [management] didn't do a good job because they chased all of the plantation workers over on our side, you know.

LM: What sort of things did you ask them to do? Did you ask them to work for you at work or?

MT: Yeah, if they're willing to come down to the office [campaign headquarters] to work, or go house to house, you know, and some of our business associates to raise money for us. And if they said, "No, we cannot come to the office, but we'll talk to people," we gave them a sheet, eight-by-fourteen-[inch] sheet, and that sheet says, "We the undersigned will vote for Burns," period, you know, and name, address, and phone number. And we started accumulating that over the years, and today, I think [John] Waihee has something like 45,000 names in the computer.

LM: So you'd ask them to check out their work colleagues and people like that?

MT: Yeah, and we would ask them to make contact with their friends, and if they find somebody who's willing to go out and do some work, to get their friends to go out, you know, like a

pyramid, and get as many people involved as possible. Because most people don't want to come to the office or go house to house, you know, and yet they come into the headquarters and they want to help. So, we gave them this sheet of paper and says, "Contact your friends, relatives, you know, don't talk to strangers." Friends and relatives.

DT: But the victory in '62 changed the status of a lot of people. I think you mentioned about choosing the cabinet, which is very interesting, maybe you'd like to talk about that a little bit. And I think it also changed the status of you and Dan Aoki.

MT: Okay, when we met at Dan Aoki's house to set up the cabinet, to form the cabinet for Burns, one of the things that Burns asked for was his brother Ed [Edward J.] Burns to be at the tax office, because he wanted Ed Burns to change the land tax laws, you know, real property tax laws. Because Burns felt that, Jack Burns felt that the plantations were getting too much of a break, as far as paying their share of the taxes, and he wanted to spread this thing a little more evenly. And Ed's job was to go in there and work on it because Ed Burns's background is a real estate appraiser.

And then take, like, Fujio Matsuda. Fujio Matsuda's name came to me through Takaichi Miyamoto. And Takaichi Miyamoto is an old supporter, way back from the Johnny Wilson days. And this is Lily Okamoto's father. And he told me about Fujio Matsuda. And he told me, there's only one doctor, local boy, at the University of Hawai'i from MIT and that sounded good, MIT with a doctorate. So one day, I called Fujio Matsuda, and I told him, "Burns wants to see you," and Matsuda went down, and Burns offered him department of transportation directorship. And that's how Matsuda got on board.

But the most interesting one was Bill Norwood, William Norwood from Castle & Cooke. See, Bill Norwood supported Burns while he was working at Castle & Cooke. And [Malcolm] MacNaughton [president of Castle & Cooke] called him in one day because Bill Norwood appeared on TV to make an ad supporting Burns. And we put the thing on, and the next day I think it was Malcolm MacNaughton wanted to see him, you know. And Malcolm MacNaughton told him, "I don't want you to support Burns. If you're going to continue to support Burns, I want your resignation," you know. And this is Bill Norwood telling me.

And so Bill Norwood says, "Well, I'm going to support him," you know, "and that's my prerogative."

And Bill Norwood—MacNaughton says, "Well, I want your resignation."

So Bill gave him a resignation, and he didn't come to work. And about a week later, MacNaughton called Bill and tells Bill, "Eh," you know, "you better come back to work. I wasn't serious." And I think by then MacNaughton kind of had a hunch that Burns was going to win, you know. So Bill Norwood went back to work.

The first announced appointment Burns gave, was Bill Norwood as his—what do you call that position—[administrative] director, right in the governor's office. The number two man in the governor's office. And he appointed Bill Norwood to that position.

And I remember Vance Middlesworth, who used to work at Dole Pineapple Company, called me up one day and told me, "Mike, I want you to arrange a meeting between Jack Burns and

Malcolm MacNaughton."

I told him, "I'd be most happy to arrange that meeting," you know, in the governor's office, I told him, not in MacNaughton's office. Everybody comes to the governor's office. The governor doesn't go to somebody else's office.

So, we arranged the meeting, and MacNaughton went up there and talked to Jack Burns. And you see, I think the people in the Big Five were so afraid of Jack Burns, they thought he was so pro-union, you know, that he was out to get the sugar companies. And Burns is smarter than that. The sugar company is the lifeblood of the state of Hawai'i, you know, and at least at that time, that was the biggest industry. And he's not going [to] do anything to get the sugar plantations to go down. And this is essentially what he told MacNaughton, you know. He told him, "I may say, sometimes, that," and he used to use the word "hegemony," you know.

DT: That's right. (Chuckles)

MT: And I've heard that word so many times, you know, I won't forget it until I die. (DT laughs.) And he told MacNaughton, "Look, if you're interested in the sugar plantations, I am also because it's the lifeblood," you know. "And I'm pro-ILWU, but it's the lifeblood of the ILWU members, and we gotta help the sugar industry." So those two saw eye to eye as far as the sugar industry was concerned. And they parted being good friends after that.

DT: Didn't this really lay the foundation for what was sort of a cornerstone of Burns' political strategy, and that was really to meld business and labor together.

MT: That's right.

DT: And lay the foundation for what has been a, well, an unbeatable coalition till this very day.

MT: That's right. See, Burns was smart in that he wanted to get big business—what we call the Merchant Street gang—behind him. And he wasn't going to step on them just out of spite.

LM: How did he get them behind him?

MT: What he did was, on every labor negotiation, if the thing got too heated, he would call both sides in, and try and settle it. And I think the business community gradually came around to realize that Burns was not only pro-labor, you know. But he's concerned about the economy of the state of Hawai'i, and he's very fair, you know. And consequently, when he ran for office, we never had too much opposition from Merchant Street. Some of them even gave money to us, you know, some Republicans. I think I told you [about] our good friend, "Doc" [William H.] Hill from Hilo. He used to send \$500 in a roundabout way, that came to—the \$500 came through [Robert] McElrath from the ILWU, you know. Doc Hill would give him the \$500, and we would get the donation from McElrath. But it was Doc Hill's check.

LM: How much money would you say you spent in '62, Burns' campaign?

MT: In '62 . . .

LM: Roughly.

MT: Roughly, I would say, \$50[,000], \$60,000, you know. Not even \$100,000, I think.

LM: Where did most of it go?

MT: Mostly printing, some TV. We couldn't afford TV too much, but mostly radio and newspaper, you know.

LM: So you had another thing on the Big Five?

DT: No, I wanted to get your reaction, Mike. I think Burns won a lot of praise for the balanced nature of his cabinet. Was that purposeful? I believe it probably was, but you would probably be in a position best to know.

MT: You see, it was done on purpose to balance the directorships, especially the directorships, because Burns felt that up until then, until the time that he got elected, the cabinet was made up of mostly Whites, you know. And I remember the time when we even went to see Oren Long, when Oren Long was the appointed governor [1951-53]. Jack Burns, Dan Aoki and myself went to see Oren Long to appoint Sakae Takahashi as treasurer of the territory of Hawai'i. And I remember Oren Long telling us, "But I had Michiro Watanabe in mind for attorney general."

And Jack Burns said, "Good. You'll have two Japanese on your cabinet," you know.

And Oren Long says, "But what is the [*Honolulu Advertiser*] and [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*] going to say?" (DT chuckles.)

And Jack Burns' answer was, "The *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin* never got you appointed to this job," you know, and Oren Long agreed. So, he had, first time in the history of the state of—I mean the territory of Hawai'i, he had Michiro Watanabe as attorney general, and Sakae Takahashi as treasurer. Two Japanese boys on his cabinet, you know. And this was out of the world under the Republican administrations like [William F.] Quinn, Sam [Samuel Wilder] King, you know.

DT: Burns was very proud of this, too, wasn't he?

MT: Yeah.

LM: How did he persuade Oren Long to do this?

MT: Oren Long?

LM: How did he persuade him?

MT: I think Burns was national committeeman, you know, and—no, no, no. Burns was party chairman. Burns was party chairman, that's right. And I think Oren Long, listening to Burns, had a little fear that he was a party chairman, and he had [a] little weight, you know, and he [Long] went along. But I could see that he was afraid of the guys down on Merchant Street,

you know, to have two Japanese boys on his cabinet.

LM: Out of how many?

MT: Out of what, fifteen at that time.

DT: Fifteen or sixteen, yes. You and Dan Aoki also changed status. This opened up a lot of jobs.

MT: That's right.

DT: You might well have been a cabinet member yourself. I mean, you and Dan had done that much for Jack over the years, surely.

MT: When we were organizing the cabinet, you know, one of the—very early, Jack Burns says, “I want Dan Aoki in my office.” Because Dan Aoki was his administrative assistant in Washington, D.C., you know, and so Burns says he wants Dan Aoki in his office. And you know, they [are] birds of the same feather, emotionally, they're alike, you know. And Burns, I mean, Dan Aoki's fearless. He'll tell anybody anything.

And when it came to me, I told Burns, “I don't want to get into your office because you're going to use me as a 'no' man,” you know, “anytime you want to say no to somebody, you're going to say, 'Go see Mike Tokunaga,' you know. And I don't want to do that because I'm a campaigner, I'm a manpower organizer, and I don't want to get into a position where I'm going to tell too many people, 'No, you cannot have it, or you cannot do that.'”

And number two, I told him I don't want to go to the labor [and industrial relations] department, because labor department, I used to work over there from 1949 to 1956. And immediately, if I get down there, the house is going to split in two, you know, my friends on one hand, and not my friends on the other. And I told him I don't want to go to personnel office, civil service office, because at civil service, everybody wants a pay raise, and they're going to file papers to get pay raise, and you know, somebody gotta sign it and say no, you know. And I don't want to be in a position to say no to somebody who wants more money, you know. So I told him put me anyplace, not a director, but a deputy director. And I wound up with Sidney Hashimoto, director, at the department of regulatory agencies.

LM: Did you continue campaigning for Jack then?

MT: Oh, yeah. As soon as I got in, we formed a deputies luncheon club. And every month, I think it was the second Monday, we met all over. We never went to the same place all the time. And from the very beginning, I told the boys, “This is a political meeting,” you know, “we're not going talk business, unless somebody wants to talk business, but we're going to talk politics right through,” you know, “and start the organization.”

DT: And that put you in excellent shape for the campaign of '66, except for one thing that happened, you hadn't calculated on that, I don't think.

(Laughter)

MT: In 1966, Burns wanted Kenny [Kenneth F.] Brown. Let me go back a little on the lieutenant

governorship. The first lieutenant governor candidate Burns wanted was Mitsuyuki Kido in the '59 election, but he lost. Burns and he lost. And in the '62 campaign, because Jimmie [James] Kealoha, we assumed was going to run for lieutenant governor again with Bill Quinn, so we went to Bill [William F.] Richardson's house. You know, we talked to Herman Lemke first, and Herman Lemke says, "No, I don't want a full-time government job," because he's a CPA [certified public accountant], you know.

And so we came down to Bill Richardson, and we spent one night at Bill Richardson's house from 7:30 at night to 2:00 in the morning, trying to convince Bill Richardson to run for office. And Bill Richardson was reluctant to run for office. His wife [Amy (Ching) Richardson] was five times more reluctant to have Bill run for office. And finally at 2:00 (A.M., Bill Richardson decided to run for office).

LM: What was his job then?

MT: He was a private attorney, practicing in Hung Wo Ching's Liberty Bank building. And finally, Amy agreed to have Bill run. Bill ran and got elected with Burns, and I think two years later [in 1966], Burns appointed him as chief justice of the state supreme court. And among lawyers, this is the highest position in the land, you know. And at that time when Bill Richardson was appointed, Burns wanted Elmer Cravalho [then speaker of the house of representatives] as lieutenant governor, but Cravalho turned it down, you know. And he told [Shigeto] Kanemoto, the clerk of the house, the reason why he turned it down is because Dan Aoki and Mike Tokunaga don't like him, you know.

And one day I saw Elmer Cravalho on the steps of the old ['Iolani] Palace, you know, this is where all the lobbyists and the legislators meet all the time. And I told Elmer Cravalho, "Eh, what do you mean, just because Dan and I don't like you, that you don't want to accept the lieutenant governorship?" I told Elmer Cravalho, "Tell me the truth. Did the ILWU tell you, don't accept it?" And that was my hunch, you know. And Elmer Cravalho smiled, he didn't say yes or no, you know. But I think, at that time, the ILWU wanted him as speaker of the house [rather] than lieutenant governor. Because the lieutenant governor is nothing, you know, no power.

LM: Okay. We gotta switch tapes here.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: The following is tape number ten of the Mike Tokunaga interview.

LM: So Elmer didn't want it, who did they ask next?

MT: Kazuhisa Abe, I think he was president of the senate. He didn't want it, and then came to Bert Kobayashi [then attorney general]. And Bert Kobayashi turned it down, and it went to Andy [Andrew] Ing [then director of finance]. But I think Bert Kobayashi, who was a law partner with [George] Ariyoshi, I think, you know, that came into play when we were looking for a lieutenant governor in 1970.

DT: [Nineteen] seventy, yeah.

LM: All right. So, who did you finally end up with in the 1966 race?

MT: The '66 race, Burns wanted Kenny Brown, and he felt that besides Elmer Cravalho, he thought that Kenny Brown would make the best governor. And he wanted Kenny Brown, he came out announcing that he wants Kenny Brown. Tom Gill ran against Kenny Brown [in the primary], you know, and when Burns asked me to go be the campaign manager for Kenny Brown, I asked Burns, "Who is he?" I didn't know Kenny Brown from Adam. (DT chuckles.) And I remember going to the first meeting at Kenny Brown's house at Diamond Head Beach, and—fabulous house, you know. And plantation boy like me going to that kind of house, you know, and we sat down, and Mary Noonan's husband—oh, I forgot what . . .

DT: Knight.

MT: Knight.

DT: [John B.] Knight.

MT: Knight. He conducted a survey, and he said, "Kenny Brown, name recognition is 5 percent. And as far as visual recognition is concerned, it's less than that." Nobody knows how he looks like, and they don't even know the name, you know. And Matsy [Matsuo Takabuki] was at the meeting, and I turn around to Matsy and I says, "Eh," you know, "we fighting a losing cause from the beginning." And Kenny Brown was sitting right there, you know. And Matsy says, "Eh, the old man wants him," you know. "The old man wants him, so you'll run his campaign," you know. I says, "Okay. We'll try our best, but I'm going to tell you, it's going to take ten mules, to pull him, to beat Tom Gill," you know.

LM: Why did Burns make such a mistake? He must have known. Why, did he just dislike Gill so much or what?

MT: I think Burns had, in the back of his mind, he did not want to see Gill become governor. And I think his fear of Gill was that he thought that Gill would be too pro-labor, and he would have industry and labor drift further and further apart, you know. And Gill was an AFL [American Federation of Labor] man, and close to people like Art [Arthur] Rutledge [head of Local 5]. And I think that was in the back of Burns's mind, that he didn't want somebody in a position who's going to split this community wide open.

DT: In other words, Burns really courted people such as a Norwood or a Kenny Brown to be a part of his . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . his administration to keep from making too many waves.

MT: That's right.

LM: So how did you folks approach this hopeless task of getting Kenny Brown to win?

MT: We tried like hell, and as the results shows, Tom Gill smashed him, you know. And . . .

LM: Were you able to use your usual network to help Kenny Brown?

MT: We used our same network like Burns's [campaigns], but all the way down the line, they asked, "Who is he?" And it's very difficult to sell when they're asking who is he, you know. And after Kenny Brown lost, Burns disappeared, you know.

DT: Well, yes and no, but you're leaving out something here, Mike. I chide you for it. You had trouble with Jack, too. He got down in Botswana, and I don't think you—you had trouble getting him home, didn't you?

MT: (Chuckles) That's right.

LM: What's this?

MT: And Burns disappeared, you know. (Chuckles)

LM: What's this?

MT: As Dan says, he went to Botswana. And . . .

LM: Why Botswana?

MT: I don't know.

DT: It's our antipode.

LM: Yeah, I know.

MT: And he didn't want to campaign when he came back, you know. And I told him, "Eh, you crazy. You're going to lose this election."

And his comment was, "How can we lose to the Republican ticket," you know. So, I was appointed a liaison with Gill's campaign, and I made constant contact with Gill's campaign, and we tried to coordinate everything. We had Burns going to one rally, and Gill going to another one, you know. We never had the two going to the same rally. And they all campaigned, and this is better. This is better because you cover more ground with two people, you know. There's no sense of having both of them go to the same coffee hour. And we struggled through the campaign, you know, and the candidates not talking to each other, and he got elected.

DT: But a lot of people behind the scenes in both camps were able to talk together, weren't you?

MT: That's right. And as far as . . .

DT: Remember those meetings, yeah . . .

MT: As far as the working relationship with the campaigners, you know, underneath the governor, we had good relationships. We had good relationships because . . .

LM: Who was running the Gill campaign?

MT: Gill's campaign . . .

LM: Or who were you working with?

MT: Who was it, Dan?

DT: Park, Arthur Park . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . and also his wife who had been Jack Burns' speaker at his kickoff dinner for governor, back earlier.

MT: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

DT: In '62. Remember Pat Kim Park.

LM: And so who'd you work with in the Gill campaign, I guess, is what I mean?

MT: My contact was Arthur Park, you know, and those people. I remember Alvin Shim's wife [Marion (Heen) Shim] was there. This is Walter Heen's sister, she was there. And so we worked together, and we worked out the schedule and everything else, but we couldn't get Burns together with Gill.

DT: But then, you managed to eke out a victory, but somewhere along the line there, you mentioned the name Mary Noonan, had been . . .

MT: Yeah.

DT: . . . at this meeting with Kenny Brown. Now, she was a Republican.

MT: She was a Republican.

DT: She'd been a cabinet officer under Bill Quinn. How did this happen?

MT: Mary Noonan, we used her husband, Knight, to do the survey for Kenny Brown. But Mary Noonan's association with Burns goes back to Kewalo Inn. Kewalo Inn was down by Kewalo Basin, across the street from where the Ward Warehouse shopping center is now. And Mary Noonan was owner of that particular restaurant down there, Kewalo Inn, with Joe Itagaki. And Joe Itagaki was a member of the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team], and he knows Dan Aoki very well. And Burns got to know Mary Noonan, and they were very friendly. And so we talked to her, you know, and she would tell us some secrets about the Republican party, you know. I don't think Mary was, I don't think Mary was a true Republican, you know. I think if she had a choice, she would have joined the Democratic party. She's more Democrat than a Republican. Very liberal, you know.

DT: There was also a matter of Bill Quinn fired her. Had to.

- MT: That's right. (DT chuckles.) When she was down at O'ahu Prison, you know, Bill Quinn fired her.
- LM: Why did he fire her?
- MT: They had some problems down at . . .
- DT: She was head of social services and she had problems with Joe Harper at the prison.
- MT: And Joe Harper, who was the [warden] at the prison, was having all kinds of problems, you know, and Mary Noonan fired Joe, Joe Harper, and Joe Harper had to go appeal to the civil service system, you know. And eventually, Bill Quinn fired Mary Noonan.
- DT: Yeah, and that was sort of a footnote to the '62 campaign, incidentally.
- LM: All right. In '66, how much would you say you spent on Burns's [campaign]?
- MT: Maybe \$150,000.
- LM: And where did most of it go?
- MT: I don't know too much about financing.
- LM: I know, I know, but I'm just looking for guesses.
- MT: Clarence Ching was our finance chairman, you know. And his name comes out every now and then when land development comes out.
- DT: You talk about spending, that's when it comes in, in '70. That's when you spent the big bucks.
- LM: That's why I'm asking you. Where did most of the money go in '66?
- MT: In '66, not too much on TV because we couldn't afford too much of that. Radio, news media, you know.
- DT: And your grassroots . . .
- MT: The grassroots primarily . . .
- DT: . . . between the two camps.
- MT: And the grassroots costs money because you gotta provide lunches and soda water and beer, and you know.
- LM: Okay, now we come to 1970, finally. (Chuckles)
- MT: Nineteen seventy. Nineteen seventy . . .

LM: You're still at HGEA, then? Or no, you're now at . . .

MT: I'm now a cabinet member, I was deputy director at accounting and general services because in 19—right after the elections of 1966, Ke Nahm Kim was made director of accounting and general services. And Lily Okamoto was the deputy. And Lily Okamoto and Ke Nahm Kim couldn't get together and couldn't get along because when Ke Nahm Kim was a deputy at, I think, budget and finance under Hiram Kamaka, and Lily Okamoto was a deputy director at DAGS, those two were meeting to decide where the computer system was going to be placed, in [the Department of] Budget and Finance or [the Department of] Accounting and General Services. And they got into a hell of a fight, and that problem had to go to the governor for the governor to decide where the computer system was going. And so when Ke Nahm Kim became Lily's boss, Lily says, "I want out."

So one day I got called by Dan Aoki, and Dan Aoki tells me, "You're going to DAGS, accounting and general services."

I ask him, "What's the problem," you know. And he told me the story about Lily and Ke Nahm Kim. So Lily went to [the department of] regulatory agencies [now the department of commerce and consumer affairs], and I went to DAGS. And . . .

LM: Still organizing?

MT: Still organizing. And Dan Aoki, we called him the first sergeant, and he has the whip, you know, and I was the manpower organizer. And in the 1970 campaign, when Gill said he was going to run for governor, we conducted a survey, you know. And it shocked us because all the surveys showed, Gill 60 percent, Burns 30 percent. And this was the survey we conducted.

DT: Yeah, didn't Gill conduct one first and had it published and then you fellows went out?

MT: I think Gill's one came out 62 percent against 27 percent, or something like that, you know. And Gill publicized it, and that was to his advantage, you know, to publicize it. We didn't want to publicize ours.

So when Gill decided to run, I went over to see Togo Nakagawa, who was like the office manager for Gill. And Togo became close to Gill because when he went to law school in Washington, D.C., Gill hired him on a part-time basis in the congressional office. So, Togo was working for Gill, and Togo Nakagawa is a 442nd member, you know. Dan Aoki knows him very well. I'm 100th Infantry, so I don't know Togo that well. But, being involved in the Democratic party, I got to know Togo, and one day, I had lunch with Togo, and I told Togo, "Gill is crazy to run," you know, "Gill is crazy to run. In '74, he's going to be governor, and he's crazy." And I told Togo Nakagawa, "Tell Gill, he should have patience and wait, you know. Because eh, survey or no survey, we going to take him on, and I think we have a way of beating him," you know.

Now, in the 1970 campaign, I was disabled. I had a heart attack in 1967, and Dan Aoki didn't want to be campaign manager all by himself. See, up until that election, up till the '66 election, Dan Aoki and I used to be the co-campaign managers, from '54 to '66. So in 1970 campaign, we pulled in Bob [Robert] Oshiro. And we told Bob, "You run the campaign," and

Bob said okay. And Bob ran the campaign, and Bob is a professional. He's not gonna get an amateur like us, you know. Bob is a professional, and he hired the most expensive PR guys that you can hire.

(Laughter)

MT: He blocked out the TV ads, you know. And he ran that campaign, and, I gotta say this for Bob, he is the best campaign manager in all of Hawai'i, you know. I don't like some of his ways, you know. Like somebody told me, the problem with Bob is, he wants to take all the credit, you know, and I told him, that's all right. If he wins, he can take all the credit, everybody takes credit, you know. But Bob, I gotta say, is the best campaign manager. He knows how to get people emotionally up, you know, up to work in the campaign. And he's a good speaker when he speaks to 200 people, workers. And Bob ran that campaign, and I think we spent close to \$2 million.

LM: Where did all the money come from?

MT: By then, since we're in the second term of office, we had more connections, you know. I remember trying to raise \$120,000 for the [University of Hawai'i] football team. Dan Aoki and I went to raise the \$120,000 for the football team because Burns says, "I want you two guys to go and get \$120,000 to help the football team." I think they were \$60,000 in the hole, and they needed \$60,000 for the next year. And Dan and I went out to raise about \$100,000 and gave it to the football organization, and that was the beginning of Koa Anuenue, you know. But in our campaign in 1970, we had enough contacts in this town to raise that kind of money. It was a struggle.

LM: How would you raise it, precisely?

MT: Making contacts—architects, engineers, you know, people who get jobs from the state. And the danger in that, you know, now days, [Neil] Abercrombie always raises the question, you know, "Who did you please?" And in this town, anyway, and like anyplace, you know, there's a working relationship between an elected office and people who do jobs for the state, you know, for counties. When the fundraising comes around, and you got a \$100 [a ticket] dinner, you tell the guy, "Here, 100 tickets," you know, and most of them will buy all of it or sell some of it. Now, the law is different. You can contribute only \$2,000 per person. But the old days, you could contribute any amount. And I was surprised we raised almost \$2 million.

DT: At any rate, you won the '70 campaign.

MT: That's right.

DT: And Gill probably was—may have blown it when he published his poll because that alerted you and . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: But, it still wasn't quite over, was it? We'll catch that on the next tape.

MT: Okay.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 17-21-2-89; SIDE ONE

JC: This is a continuation of the second session with Mike Tokunaga. This is videotape number eleven.

Larry, could you say this is eleven, please?

LM: This is eleven. What were [Joseph] Napolitan and so forth, trying to do in the "Catch a Wave" tape?

MT: The "Catch a Wave" was, primarily, this was a half-an-hour film to make Jack Burns look like a human being, you know. I think most of the public felt that Jack Burns was a stiff-backed, very unfriendly person. And his nickname was "Stone Face," he never smiles, you know.

And I remember once, somebody said at the coffee hour, "Governor, why don't you smile sometime," you know.

And Jack Burns replied, just like Jack Burns, he says, "If you want to see smiling people," he says, "you go down to Kāne'ohe Hospital," you know. (Chuckles) And he says, "They're all smiling down there."

And then after the coffee hour, I told Jack, "You shouldn't have said that," you know.

He said, "Well, they want an answer, I'll give them an answer."

But this was to soften up Jack Burns, to make him look like a human being, playing with his grandchildren, in shorts, you know. And I gotta say this though, our best campaigner was Mrs. [Beatrice] Burns. She's terrific.

LM: How so?

MT: And because she's in a wheelchair, you know, the sympathetic feelings comes out. And she makes a good presentation on TV, and amazingly, you know, she's not that nervous. But we don't want to—we didn't want to overuse her, you know, because if we did, then the opposition is going to say that we were taking advantage of a person in a wheelchair.

DT: You did use her in a tabloid, I believe, an insert in the newspapers.

MT: That's right. In the tabloid, we used it, you know, stick it in the Sunday paper. Even at women's parties, coffee hour, she used to cover some of them, you know. And once I drove her to the coffee hour, and I had to lift her out of the car, and put her in the wheelchair. I didn't know she was such a big woman, you know. And she was heavy. And because you see

her in the wheelchair all the time, you don't know that she's so tall, you know. But she's a terrific campaign manager, I mean, campaigner.

DT: By the time you got to the next campaign period, a sad period for lots of people, the governor was pretty sick, wasn't he?

MT: That's right.

DT: And no question about his running again, because George Ariyoshi, as lieutenant governor, had been sitting in for him as governor. You want to pick up the '74 campaign?

MT: The '74 campaign. Burns got cancer surgery in October of 1974, just before the end of his term. His term was going to end in December of '74. In October, he had surgery.

And I remember calling his son Jim [James S. Burns], and telling Jim that, "Before your dad goes for surgery, you better get down to the [public employees'] retirement system, and have him retire," you know. Because if he dies on the job, Mrs. Burns is going to get only what he contributed to the retirement system, plus interest, and one year's pay. Whereas, Governor Burns had something like over a quarter million dollars in reserve at the retirement system. So Jim Burns went down and got him retired. And he was technically in office, although Ariyoshi replaced him as a lieutenant governor in doing the work, but he was technically in office until December of '74.

And one day I was at St. Francis Hospital. Dan and I went up to see him, and this was—no, this was before he got sick because he got sick in October. Way back in June of '74, Burns called Dan Aoki and I and told us to organize for Ariyoshi for governorship. And so Dan and I started calling everybody to let them know that we're going to go for Ariyoshi. And I think Jimmy [James] Takushi was the campaign manager for Ariyoshi when he was running for the senate. And I know at times, Jimmy Takushi was kind of nervous about having Dan and I go down there and try to organize for the campaign. So I told Jimmy one day, "Look, Jimmy, you organize your own people, and we're going to organize the old Burns guys. So whether we have duplication or not," I told him, "that's all right. As long as we got two organizations going, you know, we're going to get George elected." And fortunately in the '74 campaign, Tom Gill and Frank Fasi decided to run against George Ariyoshi [in the primary]. And Tom Gill and Frank Fasi split the votes, the Democratic votes, and George Ariyoshi walked in. And I forgot who the Republican candidate was [Randolph Crossley] because we weren't too concerned about the Republican candidate.

DT: This was the occasion when Fasi ran an independent Democrat or something like that?

MT: No.

DT: No?

MT: Fasi ran as a Democrat. And Gill ran as a Democrat, and Ariyoshi in the Democratic primary.

DT: Okay, okay.

LM: How is Ariyoshi as a campaigner? Had you guys had much contact with him before?

MT: Ariyoshi is not a good campaigner because he cannot get people emotionally involved. That job is done very well by people like Bob Oshiro. And in politics, we call George Ariyoshi a cold fish, you know. He's not a good campaigner, but the thing that gets across with George Ariyoshi—although we used it in a campaign—integrity and sincerity, you know, and that gets across real well with him.

DT: Well, you and Dan did what you could for George in running, but I think your role was considerably reduced when compared with the period of Jack Burns, is that correct?

MT: That's right. And Dan and I realized that we were in the campaign, you know, not even on George Ariyoshi's kitchen cabinet, you know. And we were called the kitchen cabinet boys with Burns, you know. But Dan and I knew that George Ariyoshi had his own friends like Jimmy Takushi and Walter Dods [Jr.] at First Hawaiian Bank, Bert Kobayashi, and now Bert Kobayashi, Jr., you know. All of his former associates when he used to run for other offices before were closer to him, and we accepted that.

But I think the mistake was made—Dan Aoki should have asked to be transferred out of the governor's office and [be] put into a department like a deputy or something, you know. But George Ariyoshi kept Dan Aoki in the governor's office, and Dan Aoki used to get into arguments and fights with Sus [Susumu] Ono who was the administrative director in the governor's office.

And 1974—1978, on inauguration day, Dan Aoki tells me, "I just got fired," you know.

And I told Dan, "No."

He told me, "I'm fired. January 1st, I gotta clean out," you know. And I got a sneaking hunch who told George Ariyoshi to get rid of him, you know. I won't mention names, but . . .

DT: Oh, come on. (Laughs)

MT: Well, my suspicion, my suspicion is—see, George is not the kind of guy to fire anybody, you know. But my suspicion is, Bob Oshiro and Frank Hata. Because Dan Aoki had a terrible fight with those two guys, you know. With Bob Oshiro, in the 1978 campaign, Bob Oshiro was telling the governor and telling us that he was not going to be the campaign manager, and he was trying to push Dan Aoki to be the campaign manager. And Dan Aoki is no campaign manager, you know. Dan Aoki doesn't have the finesse to be a campaign manager. He has a place in any campaign. And so, one day a luncheon was called at Washington Place, and we got invited, Dan and I got invited, so we went. And Bob Oshiro, in front of everybody, including the governor, pushing Dan Aoki for campaign manager. And Dan Aoki was taken by surprise, you know. And after Bob Oshiro finished, Dan Aoki said, "No way I'm going to be the campaign manager," and the governor is there, you know.

And when I went back to my office, Dan Aoki calls me and says, "We're going to see Bob Oshiro at his office tomorrow," you know. And we went to Bob Oshiro's office, and Dan Aoki let him have it, you know. And the secretary, you know, he has a partition that doesn't

go all the way to the ceiling. The secretary heard every word of it, you know. Dan and I were sitting in there with Bob, and Dan Aoki really let him have it. And from that day, those two drifted apart. But during the campaign, they worked, you know, not together, separately, they got involved.

LM: Bob Oshiro's specialty is also supposed to be grassroots organizing. Was he—so how did the division of labor come out in, say, '74 and '78?

MT: Well, Bob Oshiro was an overall campaign manager. And he had people like Dan Aoki and myself, Takushi, Island Termite—what's his name? Anyway, we used to call him Fat Boy.

LM: Okuda?

MT: Not Okuda.

MK: [Ted] Kimura?

DT: Kimura, yeah.

MT: Kimura, yeah. Those kind of people, they used to organize the grassroots. And Bob Oshiro is the overall campaign manager.

LM: So how did you do it? By areas, geographic areas?

MT: By areas. I was in charge mostly from 'Āina Koa all the way out to Koko Head. Dan Aoki, Pālolo Valley area. And we used to divide the island. And in the contact with the neighbor islands, Dan Aoki used to check with Turk Tokita on Kaua'i, Pundy [Masaru] Yokouchi on Maui, and Tadao Okimoto on Hawai'i [Island]. And Jimmy Takushi also had his own contacts through the Ariyoshi organization. So, most of the time, we had dual organizations going, you know, and we told them, no problem as long as there's not too many duplications.

LM: I'm sorry. How about, how much money and what proportion in '74 and '78, would you say?

MT: Roughly \$2 million.

LM: And how—where did the money go, roughly, would you say?

MT: Mostly TV coverage, radio, news media.

LM: Okay. So was—how did you decide that what went—you said what went over well with Ariyoshi was sincerity and integrity. Was this just a gut feeling or had you guys done surveys or . . .

MT: Yeah, we conducted surveys to find out what they [the public] like about George Ariyoshi. And most of it was integrity. And . . .

LM: This is new, this is new. I mean, wasn't there—didn't anyone resist this? This is a new way to decide what to emphasize, yeah?

MT: Yeah. We had a slogan, "Quiet and Effective," you know, and in one campaign, we used integrity, the word integrity. I forgot what the other word was. But as I said, George [Ariyoshi] was a very fortunate candidate. The first time he ran, the two major opposition was Gill and Fasi, you know, so he slipped in between.

The second time, he just got by Frank Fasi in the primary. I think he beat Frank Fasi by about 3,000 votes or something, because Frank Fasi beat him on O'ahu, and George Ariyoshi had to go to the neighbor islands to pick up enough. I think he lost O'ahu by 9,000 and won by 12,000 on the neighbor islands, you know. And the third time around, because Frank couldn't make it as a Democrat, he ran as an independent Democrat and [D.G.] Andy Anderson ran as a Republican, and George Ariyoshi in the general election slipped in.

DT: Now, this was '82, right?

MT: That was 19 . . .

DT: [Nineteen] eighty-two, I think.

MT: . . . '82. That was 1982.

DT: Yeah, 'cause I misplaced that earlier, so I wanted to make sure we . . .

LM: When did you first start using surveys to decide on your campaign themes?

MT: I would say when Bob Oshiro came in, in 1970, we started going into surveys. Jack Burns never did put reliance on surveys, you know, especially the early ones. And sometimes, I look at surveys and I believe that. Because as an example, in 1980 [1984], Eileen Anderson's people called me and asked me to come down and give them an opinion on who I think would win in the 1980 mayor's race, Frank Fasi or Eileen Anderson. Frank Fasi is a Republican. And I looked at the figures, and I went down and told them that if Frank Fasi ran as a Republican against Eileen Anderson—Eileen Anderson was an incumbent—that I would bet on Frank Fasi. And I told them the reason why is that I looked at the governor's race in 1982—wait a minute—governor's race in—wait, the mayor's race was . . .

LM: [Nineteen] seventy-eight. So it would be governor's race in '78.

MT: No, the governor's race in 19 . . .

LM: So, Eileen versus . . .

MT: [Nineteen] eighty-four, no, '82.

LM: . . . okay.

MT: [Nineteen] eighty-two.

DT: [Nineteen] eighty-two, was Anderson-Ariyoshi . . .

LM: So you're talking about . . .

MT: The mayor's race came after that . . .

LM: Right.

MT: . . . in '84.

LM: So you're talking about '84 race?

MT: Yeah, '84 race, yeah.

LM: [D.G.] Anderson versus Fasi [in the Republican primary], okay.

MT: And that was the mayor's race in '84, and I told the Eileen Anderson people that if Frank Fasi ran as a Republican, I would bet on Frank Fasi, and everybody got mad at me. And I told them the reason why is that, in the governor's race, if you took Frank Fasi's votes and Andy Anderson's vote against Ariyoshi, those two polled 17,000 more votes than Ariyoshi. And if Frank Fasi runs as a Republican, and Andy Anderson goes and support him, eh, 17,000 vote lead, you know. And I don't think on O'ahu, Eileen Anderson is stronger than Ariyoshi. So if that is true, I told them, watch out, Frank Fasi might win.

And all through the campaign, the survey showed Eileen Anderson was leading, 10, 20 percent, you know. And I used to tell the guys down at the headquarters, don't believe in the surveys, especially the early ones, you know. Because I told them, in this race, Sam [Samuel P.] King, a conservative Republican, if he got called, I don't think he would say "I'm going to vote for Frank Fasi," because he cannot stomach Frank Fasi. So, most likely he would say, "I don't know." He comes out no opinion, you know. So don't believe the surveys, I told them.

DT: Now, here, you were talking about the published surveys.

MT: The public surveys, yeah.

DT: Yeah, in the newspapers.

MT: And all through the campaign, she was leading. Until two weeks before the general, the governor called us and told us come down to the headquarters. And Ruby Kimoto, the secretary, when she called me, and I told her, "Okay, I'll be there."

And she says, "Don't you want to know why?"

I told her, "I know, I know. Frank Fasi is leading."

DT: Worked out well. (Laughs)

MT: Yeah. So we went down to the headquarters, and Ariyoshi gave a pitch to all his cabinet members and all the Ariyoshi supporters that we gotta go out and produce the votes, because Eileen Anderson's survey, her own survey, showed she was nine percent behind. And I told Gary Caulfield [Ariyoshi's administrative assistant] after the meeting, "Eh, no way you're going to catch [Fasi] in two weeks," you know.

DT: By '86, I think, you're pretty well out of the campaign, weren't you, or were you still doing things for the [John] Waihee-[Cecil] Heftel contest [in the Democratic primary in 1986] which was . . .

MT: Yeah. I was down there more like an advisor, you know.

DT: Yeah, you retired from the public service when?

MT: In '86.

DT: [Nineteen] eighty-six. And so when this campaign came along, you [had] just retired?

MT: Yeah. So, . . .

LM: What was your analysis of that campaign?

MT: In 1985, I was going to retire in December. And one day, in November 1985, John Waihee asked me if I would support him, you know. And I told him, "You're going to run for governor?" And this was one year before the campaign.

And he said, "Yeah, I'm planning to." He said, "I'm 90 percent sure I'm going to run."

I told him, "I was going to retire in December," this was in November. So, I had to come home and ask my wife if I could work another year because she didn't want to lose \$150,000 with me dying on the job. And I told Waihee, "Do me a favor. Take Dan Aoki and Don Horio to lunch, and ask them personally to help you," you know.

LM: Okay, I think we better change tapes here. We can start right there.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JC: This is continuation of Mike Tokunaga interview. This is videotape number twelve, and this is the last tape of the interview.

Okay, anytime.

LM: You advised Waihee to see Horio and . . .

MT: Yeah. So I told John Waihee to check with Dan Aoki and Don Horio [press secretary for Governor Burns] because I wanted Dan Aoki and Don Horio to make a commitment to support Waihee. I didn't want Frank Fasi to run, and Dan Aoki would go to Frank Fasi. And Dan might have done that because anybody Ariyoshi backs up, you know, Dan Aoki didn't like it at that time. So they had lunch, and about three days later, Dan Aoki called me up and says, "Eh, we're going to go Waihee."

I told him, "Okay, boss," you know.

And we worked for Waihee, and unfortunately, Dan Aoki went on a catamaran cruise on June 10, 1986, and came back from the cruise at midnight, and went someplace to eat saimin, and

got home at two o'clock in the morning, and went to sleep. And next morning, Don Horio was waiting for Dan Aoki for ten o'clock pick-up to go golf. And Dan Aoki never did show up.

So, Don Horio called Dan Aoki's house. And Michael, the son, answered the phone, and Michael went in to wake up Dan, and he was dead. And that was on June 11, Kamehameha Day, 1986. So that was the end of Dan Aoki's political career. And I always used to tell Dan, "I think you're going to die with your boots on," you know. And he was heavily involved in Waihee's campaign, and he died all of a sudden.

So about a week later, at the headquarters, when Bob Oshiro called a meeting, Bob Oshiro said, "Mike, I want you to give a very emotional speech to the boys about Dan Aoki."

And I said, "Okay, but I think I'm going to cry," you know.

And he said, "You should cry because if you cry, it's more effective," you know.

And I got up there, and I told the boys, you know, how hard Dan Aoki worked, and what a great politician he was, and that he had committed to support John Waihee, and he worked like hell, you know, and he died with his boots on, you know. And I told the boys that in this primary, against Heftel, we're going to dedicate the primary victory to Dan Aoki. And John Waihee was in Bob Oshiro's office and he heard that, you know. And with tears in my eyes, I said that.

And so, on the night of the election, when John Waihee won, on TV—I never go down to the headquarters on election night, I always watch my own TV. And if the candidate loses, I go down, you know. If he wins, I don't go down, too many friends down there. (LM laughs.) And with Jack Burns' campaign, I used to go down, you know. But I noticed on election night, when Waihee won, he dedicated his victory to Dan Aoki. And Dan Aoki's sister was there at the campaign headquarters, and he called Esther, Esther Lee, up to the stage, and he offered Esther Lee a lei that he brought back from Maui the day before. So Esther was thrilled, you know. She took that lei all the way back to Washington, D.C.

LM: In that campaign, you were really outspent.

MT: Yeah.

LM: Very heavy TV against you, the opposite of your previous campaigns. How did you win?

MT: Grassroots, mostly. See, Bob Oshiro did not come in—when John Waihee asked me to work for him for governorship, I called Nadao Yoshinaga. And Nadao Yoshinaga is a premier grassroots organizer, you know. And I told Nadao, "Eh, where we going? Waihee, yeah?"

[Yoshinaga] told me, "Yeah."

And I told him, "We better get moving," you know, and set up coffee hours, and meetings.

And Nadao said, "Yeah, okay." And we started organizing from November all the way up. And all the time, Nadao Yoshinaga was in contact with Bob Oshiro to try and get Bob Oshiro

to come in and manage the campaign. But Waihee had a young group, you know, Frank Hayashida and the representative who died—what was his name?

DT: [Larry] Kuriyama?

MT: No.

DT: No?

MT: Just recently, the representative [Roland Kotani].

DT: Oh, yes.

MT: Anyway, those young people started working very early, Sandy Ebesu, you know. And Bob Oshiro never did come into the campaign until about April of 1986. And when he came in, we moved headquarters, and he started organizing. And Bob did a tremendous job. And this particular campaign, I told Bob, "We're not going to match Heftel's money. It has to be grassroots." And I told Bob, "What you have to do, the first thing, is to write a letter to the 40,000 people in George Ariyoshi's computer files," and that computer file is down at Frank Hata's Primo Distributors, "and send out a letter with your signature, and maybe four or five other signatures. But your signature gotta be on it, because the people who [will be] getting it, are going to read it, read into it, 'Ariyoshi is behind Waihee,' " you know. And Bob sent out 40,000 letters, so (claps hands) things just started with a bang in April, you know, 40,000 people were notified, "We're all for Waihee."

LM: But the Waihee folks didn't have access to that originally, huh?

MT: No, because Frank Hata controls that, you know, and very valuable piece of information. Because that file has house-to-house workers, contributors, you know. Everybody who does anything in the campaign.

LM: So then, more people came in to work on the grassroots from there?

MT: That's right. And as we went along, this campaign came down—as I sensed it, you know, just the feel—a local boy against a Mainland *Haole*, you know. And the words, *keiki o ka 'āina* was used quite often. And I told Bob Oshiro, oh, about September in the campaign, "I think we got it." Because the so-called local people I talked to, whether they are Filipinos or Hawaiians or Chinese or Japanese, they were all for Waihee.

DT: I'm not sure if this explanation would completely satisfy the Heftel forces. They were—when the election, the primary, was *pau*, they were screaming smear and all sorts of rumor mills and documents, that sort of thing. Do you have any explanation for that?

MT: I would say this. The smear [explanation] is the one they used the most. The smear, I understand, came out three or four days before the primary election, and seventeen or eighteen letters were sent. And no way you're going to get the word out to the mass, you know, of a smear like that in four days.

DT: What about the rumors?

- MT: You know, and a lot of rumors, you know. But, I say in any campaign, there's a lot of rumors, you know. And . . .
- LM: What do you think the turning points were? Bob Oshiro coming in and sign—you know, getting a crack at the 40,000. What other turning points? How about the debate?
- MT: I think when Bob Oshiro got hold of the Ariyoshi workers, you know, that was one of the major things. And Waihee, himself. Waihee himself projected pretty good, you know. He projected an image of local boy, you know, a *keiki o ka 'āina*, and I think it went across to all the ethnic groups, you know. And I don't think, because of the surveys that were coming out, Heftel knew what was coming on, you know. And that's the reason why, I think, he turned so sour, and went on the other side and supported Andy Anderson [in the general election].
- LM: How about the debate? How do you think that came out?
- MT: We always say, two politicians, nobody wins, you know. You can put two politicians on TV and usually, it comes out a tie, you know.
- LM: But as a tie—was the tie—wasn't a tie better for Waihee? Up to that point, Heftel had been seen as a very strong leader.
- MT: That's right. And we told Waihee, all he had to do was hold him to a draw, you know. Because the media was coming out, with his [Heftel's] ads like, you know, he was a smooth-talking person on the TV. And on TV, he looks very bright, you know.
- LM: When you look back, you know, from early days, I mean, what do you think when you look back, I mean, from now back to 1950 or 1948 or something?
- MT: I would say in the early campaigns, up until when Dan Aoki and I ran the [Burns] campaigns from '54 to '66, it was physically and mentally tiring, you know, because we didn't have the money to go mass media, TV and everything else, and most of it was manpower work. Once the media started being used, it was selling an image, and it's like selling apples, and if the candidates look delicious, you know, you're going to sell. And consequently, you don't have that staying at the headquarters until two, three o'clock in the morning, you know, and sometimes, Dan Aoki used to sleep at the headquarters, you know. I had a policy, I would never sleep at the headquarters. And after my heart attack, I never stayed down there beyond twelve o'clock midnight, you know.
- LM: But in the early days, did you guys—what did you guys think would happen? When you look back now, you're—you look at it now, here the Democratic party has dominated for thirty, thirty-five years. And you know, compare that to what you were thinking then.
- MT: Well, if you look at the history of the Democratic party, the Democratic party, I think, it's coming to the end of the rule, you know. Not so much the house and the senate, but the major positions. And if you look at the mayors throughout the state, three of them are Republicans, you know, only one Democrat. And I think in the next election, the Republicans are going to go all out to take the governorship. Now, if they can take the governorship, you know, they got the whole package. Because the senate and the house, compared to the

governor's power, it's minor. And if Frank Fasi runs, you know, we going to have a battle. Looking at Frank Fasi's strength against [Marilyn] Bornhorst [in the 1988 mayor's race]. And most people will vote for the same candidate no matter what race he runs in, you know. We're going to have a hell of a time taking that Frank Fasi vote away from him to Waihee, you know.

DT: Incidentally, was Kotani, Representative [Roland] Kotani . . .

MT: That's right.

DT: . . . the name that you were trying to think of?

MT: Representative Kotani. Yeah, and Representative Kotani, and Frank Hayashida and those young boys, I don't know all the names, but, they were the Young Turks in the Waihee campaign. And somebody asked me to recommend to Waihee to replace Representative Kotani, and that person is sixty-seven years old. And I told my friend he's too old, you know. What Waihee needs is a thirty-five-year-old representative, and he's gotta reach down into the younger element.

LM: Did you guys have any idea in the early days—were you just trying for parity with the Republicans or did you think you could win over, you know, dominate them eventually? What was your . . .

MT: After the '54 campaign, we were convinced that we can dominate for a long time because after we took the house and the senate, it's only a matter of time we would take the governorship. And I kind of sense that the Democratic party is getting splintered, you know, and it looks like everybody for himself. I think in the old days, if you take the [Nadao] Yoshinagas and the [John] Ushijimas and the [Kazuhisa] Abes and [Nelson] Dois from Hilo, you know, throughout the state, these people in the [19]50s and [19]60s, they had a common purpose. Because they were plantation stock, and they wanted equality, you know. And they worked for equality, they improved the educational system.

And Burns caught it, you know, from the Yoshinagas and the [Elmer] Cravalhos, and those guys. I went to Hilo once with Burns, and Burns made a statement that if he had to make a choice between money and a child, he would favor the child. And I thought it was a terrific—I'd never heard it, you know. So every time I go to a school, a PTA meeting, you know, I put that across in the name of Burns. And consequently, during the Burns administration, if you look at the educational system, it really improved. And that's because, I think, thanks to Ben Dillingham, way back in the early [19]50s, when we went to a senate hearing, education committee in the senate, and Dillingham said to the PTA members, if you want good schools, what you guys should do is tell your parents to send you to Harvard, you know. And furthermore he says, you guys are making—your parents are making too many babies, we cannot take care of all of them, you know.

But because of that kind of a philosophy, the Democrats, when they came in, one area they really improved was the educational system and the University of Hawai'i, and they poured a lot of money into it.

LM: Why do you think they didn't make as much progress in land reform?

MT: In land reform, very difficult to show results. Because of the system we have, we've been talking about affordable homes for years and years and years, you know. And affordable homes are very difficult to produce because of the high land cost, high cost of material, very difficult. I'm glad Waihee is getting on it to use some of the government money to make loans at low interest rates, you know, and produce houses at the least possible cost.

LM: But in the original formulations, the Democratic party, they wanted to break up the big estates.

MT: That's right.

LM: How come that never happened?

MT: The Democratic party ran into a problem in trying to create a land law which does not violate private interests. And everybody had the idea of taking the land away from Bishop Estate, subdividing it, and sell it, and condemning your land for housing. And when Bishop Estate went to court, we found out that we can't do that, you know. And then they came into forcing Bishop Estate to sell the leases in fee [under the 1967 residential leasehold law]. And that, I think is working. But our state is land hungry, you know. Everybody wants a piece of land to put a house on it. And it's becoming so expensive, you know. It's almost an impossibility for a young couple to buy a home nowadays.

DT: Well, that's largely because we have a limited amount of land with many more people chasing it these days. I think Andy [Andrew] Lind sort of put his finger on that years ago, you may recall. I don't know, I think we're getting nearer to the end of these discussions. Mr. Tokunaga, I think if we could sum you up as a character, I think I would use that expression in Hawaiian politics, you were really a very valiant and loyal general among Jack Burns' many foot soldiers. Is that a fair label to apply to you?

MT: I think so. I was a foot soldier, manpower organizer through and through. And I never got involved in PR or fundraising or, you know, the other things that are involved in a campaign. And my station in the political organization was a manpower organization, and I enjoyed it. I really enjoyed it.

I want to give some opinions on what's going to happen in the future. Nineteen ninety, you know, if Frank Fasi runs for governor, I think we got a battle. I think, looking at Frank Fasi's vote when he ran for the governorship the last time and the mayor's race most recently, he's got a hell of a lot of supporters who vote for him, you know. Now, if Frank Fasi goes for the governorship, who are we going to run for mayor? And I can see people like [Benjamin] Cayetano, [Arnold] Morgado, maybe Patsy Mink, you know. Patsy Mink's, best race, I think, is if [then Congressman Daniel] Akaka gets [appointed] to the Bishop Estate [board of trustees], and Patsy Mink's race is the Congressional district, second district, you know. But we got a real problem in 1994. Who are we going to put up for governor? Now, people will say Cayetano is automatically going to step into that position, but he's going to have opposition. He's going to have opposition.

But, if Frank Fasi cannot win in 1990, you know, he won't be a candidate in 1994. But I think we got to watch out for Pat [Patricia] Saiki, you know. And being a woman, she may not be able to make it, but if she's conducting herself the way she is now, the Republicans, I

think, have a good candidate with Pat Saiki. But, the other thing that's going to hurt the Democrats, I think we're going to have one hell of a vicious fight in the primary. So I don't know whether I'm going to get involved in 1990, if I'm around.

(Laughter)

LM: Everyone will be courting you, that's for sure.

DT: We're out of tape, so I think, we thank you, anyway, even if we didn't get to put it on the tape, Mike.

END OF INTERVIEW

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